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AND
WANDERING
A CRUISE IN THE "LANCASHIRE WITCH"

BY
F. FRANCIS



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WAR, WAVES, AND WANDERINGS.

A CRUISE IN THE "LANCASHIRE WITCH."

BY

F. FRANCIS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.



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WAR, WAVES, AND WANDERINGS.



CHAPTER I.

EXPEDITION UP COUNTRY.

WE had been in Bangkok about a fortnight, when we started on an expedition up country. Our plans were, as usual, "to go somewhere or other and do whatever happened." A vague, perhaps, but, on the whole, an agreeable method. If sport fell in our way we were repared for it, and if the trip should resolve itself simply into a question of "loafing," we had studied the art and were thoroughly familiar with the part we should be called upon to play. After weighing the varied information received on the subject, our chances of

the former seemed slight. There is undoubtedly grand sport to be obtained in Siam; but to a large party such as ours the difficulties of travelling and procuring provisions are almost insuperable, or, at any rate, only to be overcome by a great expense of time. The party consisted of Mr. Newman, H——, S—— and myself, Fritz, Saïd, Newman's native servant Lazarus (a Madras cook), and a crowd of boatmen. The Kalahom lent a large steam launch to tow us to Canburee, and a couple of gondolas, each manned by seven men and affording comfortable sleeping accommodation in their little deck cabins for two persons. Newman had his own boat, one of a similar description.

The first part of the journey lay through canals, connecting the Meinam with the Tachin and this latter river with the Meklong. The country was uninterestingly flat, and partially flooded owing to the late heavy rains up country. But when, as the afternoon wore on, we issued from these narrow, overhung water-ways and floated

upon the broad Meklong, its appearance was entirely changed. Bananas, tall clumps of graceful bamboos with feathery foliage not unlike the willow, stalwart mangoes, stately palms, tree ferns, and the great embossed trunks of many a "green-robed senator" whose name I knew not, fringed with rich scenery the banks of a river far broader than the Thames. On we glided up its bold sweeping reaches, dotted here and there with tiny eyots, and far away off in the distance could be discerned the peaks of purple mountains rising into the warm afternoon sky. Unseen birds—

"— curious chanters of the wood,
That warble forth Dame Nature's lays"—

carolled joyously in their leafy cloisters as we stole quietly along under the banks; and ever and anon we happened upon little villages ensconsed beneath the trees, whose light-hearted inhabitants would quit their employments or open-air La Khon, and rush to gaze a moment laughingly at our string of boats as it swept slowly by. Deeper and deeper waxed the golden haze;

the shadows had reached their utmost length, "the good-night blush of eve was waning slow," when the pointed roofs of Ratchaburee came in sight. We drew up on the right bank of the river, near the centre of the town, which in its general characteristics resembles Bangkok on a small scale.

H—— and Newman went at once to visit the Governor, whilst S—— and I took a short walk. It was too late to explore much of the town. We noticed many gangs of prisoners in chains. In Siam men are imprisoned for debt, and as their gambling propensities make them very reckless about incurring it, the number of chain gangs that may be seen about the towns is startling. The system of domestic slavery and the condition of slaves in Siam is probably better than in any other part of the world. In the course of the evening the Governor came to the boats to visit us. He is one of the Kalahom's numerous sons, by name Phra Satcha Pirom. Having passed some years in England, he has acquired a good

knowledge of the language, and he still retains many pleasant recollections of his experiences there. He informed us that Ratchaburee contains ten thousand inhabitants.

We slept in the boats and got under way next morning at 8.30. During the day's journey we were hardly ever out of sight of river-side villages and towns. The inhabitants appeared to be principally engaged in fishing, a variety of nets being used for this purpose. Amongst them I noticed stake-nets, seines, casting-nets, a kind of folding sparrow-net, and a large square-mouthed bag-net, rigged on a framework attached to shears, by which it was raised and lowered into the water. Frequently also I observed men trolling or spinning with long bamboo rods. Fish swarm in the river, and can be seen incessantly rising and leaping from the water. Children, too, appear to be almost as numerous. Were not the old physiological theory connecting fish diet with large families exploded, one might refer to it as the cause.

Certainly I never saw such tribes of children elsewhere. In the neighbourhood of the villages they literally covered the banks.

The weather was charming, and lying at ease in the open, windowless, doorless cabins, whilst the gondolas glided smoothly over the stream, was the most dreamy, luxurious mode of travelling. We did not halt until evening; then, more by good luck than judgment, we chanced upon a spot free from mosquitoes. Canburee was still a long day's journey distant; it was necessary to start again, therefore, at sunrise.

The scenery now grew wilder and more varied. Wooded heights rose here and there abruptly out of the river; villages became rarer and more rare, and travelling house-boats, hitherto numerous, were seldom met with. Monkeys peeped curiously out of the bamboo clumps and cautiously withdrew; occasionally peacocks were heard. This seems the original home of kingfishers—their Eden, or perhaps their Paradise. In every reach numbers are poised in mid air, motionless save for the rapid fluttering

of their wings as they search the crystal shallows. Again and again, if the search be fruitless, the unwearied pirates will shift position; but at length rewarded, with suddenly closed pinions, they drop like stones into the sunny ripples, scarcely a splash marking their unerring success. Solitary, in pairs, trios, even quartettes, they perch on overhanging boughs, decayed stumps, or exposed roots in the deep nook-shotten banks, patiently watchful till some unwary fish glance near the surface. Short shrift is his. Straightway a brilliant meteor flashes through the sunlight, and almost brushing the waters with his silvery prey, the kingfisher skims towards a favourite haunt, and vanishes through heavy festoons and trailing trelliswork of creepers into the dim recesses of the jungle beyond—

“Where the glossy kingfisher
Flutters when noon heats are near.”

“Give me my gun, Tip!”

“Four to one on the bird,” he says, handing it out to me.

However, the second barrel drops one—a

gorgeous blue bird, with auburn breast. Having nothing better to do, I skin it, and in deference to the superstitions ancient mariners held with regard to the halcyon, scatter a few loose feathers on the lazy flood, and breathe a prayer to the gods for fortune and fine weather. Not less remarkable than their numbers is their variety, and the great size attained by some of them. I have shot specimens of the metallic green kingfisher, with tawny breast, over fourteen inches in length, and I have seen birds that considerably exceeded this size. Kingfishers' feathers were formerly an article of exportation from Siam, but their export has been latterly forbidden by law.

About dusk we arrive at Canburee, a town of five or six thousand inhabitants. Formerly it belonged to the Burmese, but was taken from them in one of their wars with the Siamese, and has, I believe, since that time, steadily declined in size and importance. It is prettily situated at the junction of two rivers of nearly equal size. We followed that on the left, and rowing next day (for

the first time, as the steam launch returned from Canburee), we proceeded about eight miles up stream, and stopped, before noon, at a floating house, near a bamboo summer-house belonging to the Regent. Here the Governor of the district met us and placed his resources at our disposal. It was too hot to do anything until the afternoon; so we breakfasted, and then lounged about the floating house, fishing with extempore tackle and listening to the prospects of sport held forth by the natives.

During a pause in the conversation S——, who was reclining at ease, according to his custom, on the bamboo matting of the floor, suddenly sprang up with a yell and a howl.

“Oh! oh! oh! Hi! cut the trousers off me! Cut 'em off, I tell ye! He's up my leg! Oh! the beast!”

In the midst of performing a kind of Cherokee war-dance he succeeded in tying his pocket-handkerchief round his leg. We, from laughter, were rendered powerless to help him.

The handkerchief fixed, he began again, louder than ever. "Cut the trousers off, I tell you! Cut 'em off, quick! Oh! oh! oh! he's up my leg! I've tied him *in*."

"What is it, Tip?"

"A snake—a young crocodile—a lizard—some slimy reptile. I can feel him. There he is, the brute! He's moving about."

"It's a lizard Cherry was hunting," said Newman. "Shake him out, Tip."

At length, removing the handkerchief, S—— began gingerly shaking the leg of his trousers, with a face no pencil could ever depict. Meanwhile Cherry, Newman's terrier, waited at the bottom of the leg, watching, as if at a rat hole, for his escaped prey. Presently, down came the lizard, and with a dash Cherry secured him, while S—— spasmodically tucked his trousers inside his socks, and went to the table for a drink after his exertions.

In the afternoon H—— and Newman went out with the boats, netting; S—— and I for a prowl in the jungle. They took a few fish; we saw nothing but a few

jungle-cock, although one of our prahns,* when he returned, told the Governor that he had seen a kwang.† As he had not attempted to point it out to us, I fancy he evolved the animal out of his own inner consciousness, in order to humour His despotic Excellency, who thoroughly appreciates the corrective properties of that most excellent plant, the rattan, and might, had he seen nothing, have visited on his feelings the shortcomings of his vision.

Two short mornings' work now brought us to a point where a large bamboo house was being erected for the Regent, who intended shortly to visit this district. Here the affable old Governor, who had preceded us again, received us. The large dining-table and chairs he had transported from below for our use, were placed under a broad-spreading tree, and about a dozen prahns (a murderous crew of villains, unless appearances belied them) stood ready to do

* *Prahn*, a huntsman or shikaree.

† *Kwang*, a species of deer.

our bidding. The elephants were expected to arrive next day.

"How about tigers?" was our first query.

"Tigers!" said His Excellency, taking a long pull at the French brandy. "Oh, they kill everything."

This was encouraging. As his eye wandered affectionately towards the bottle, he was assisted to another heel-tap (he took it "neat") and was again questioned.

"Would you kill tigers? The jungle is full of them. You need not seek them—they will come."

Still his glance lingered round the bottle. More brandy and more tigers. In proportion as the brandy decreased, the tigers increased, until I began to wonder what we should do with such a lot of tigers' skins.

The prahns were despatched in opposite directions into the jungle, to erect two watching-places. Meanwhile we spent the day variously. H—— and Newman went out netting; S—— strolled off with a gun

somewhere ; I employed the time in sketching. Later on, H—— and I partook of an early dinner, excellently prepared by Newman's Madras cook ; soup, fish, peacock, curry, and a sweet omelette finding place in its extensive *menu*.

Then, shouldering our rifles, we started, leaving Newman and S—— to an evening of partaga-partagas and *écarté*. H—— travelled down, I up, the river. A short row brought us to some farm huts, where we landed. Here a young calf, for bait, was awaiting us. The animal appeared fully conscious of his destiny, and protested against it with a voice like a brazen trumpet. This was satisfactory ; for if there was a tiger in Siam with an affection for veal, I thought he could not possibly resist the invitation. Dusk was deepening when we struck into the shadow-fraught jungle. Before me, along the winding track which led through its gloomy depths, flitted the figures of my wild and villainous looking prahns. I might have been leaving the outer world, and following some ghostly

messengers into the realms of darkness, were it not that all vain imaginings were dispelled by the brazen utterances of the rebellious calf borne in our wake. Mighty teak trees, "branch-charmèd by the silent stars," reared their gaunt figures in our way, and the twisted, straggling arms of giant creepers hung clutchingly down from above. Bamboos creaked and swayed with unearthly, unaccountable noises; but scathless we passed through all these forest terrors, and reached at length an open space, where the prahns had decreed I was to watch the night. The calf-bearers fastened their charge to a stake and left us. The prahns and I climbed into the platform they had formed of bamboos in a tree hard by, and settled down to wait. By-and-by the moon rose. By this time I was busily engaged in quietly battling with the swarms of mosquitoes that attacked me on all sides, and stung through my flax coat and breeches as if they were gauze. As some one remarked after being attacked by insects of another description, "had they

been unanimous," they would have removed me from the platform. However, I clung on and cursed.

Several things occurred to me now. I discovered that prolonged sitting on a bamboo platform was not exactly luxurious; it occurred to me that if smoke was forbidden, I might, at any rate, have brought an unlighted pipe to pull at; I bethought me with repentance of the flask Newman had offered and I had refused just before starting; I realized clearly the fact that the mosquitoes were far too numerous and blood-thirsty to allow this night watching for tigers to be an altogether peaceful and unruffled joy; I began to reflect that the tigers had not begun absolutely to crowd the calf yet; and, lastly, it dawned upon me that that imbecile brute had not uttered a sound since he had been tied up. This was serious, because my scheme was for the calf to make a row as if he was in pain or trouble, and then for any charitable old tiger that happened to be strolling about to feel touched and come to shepherd him, under which circum-

stances we should all be gratified. By means of complicated signs I consulted with the prahns. They were anxious to cut the calf's throat. This I objected to, on musical grounds. Eventually they descended to expostulate with him. I had a sort of suspicion that they were going to cut his throat a little, or otherwise tune him in some barbarous manner, so I remained where I was. Besides, I reflected that they might be accustomed to be jumped upon by midnight tigers, and consequently knew the proper mode of receiving such attentions, whereas, in my ignorance, I should probably give the beast needless offence.

My friends the prahns did not waste time recklessly below themselves, but, having cut some creepers, manufactured a long rope, one end of which they attached to the calf's hind legs, the other brought with them to the platform. Then they began to jerk him about at intervals, with considerable freedom. But the calf, an obstinate, disoblising creature, pretended to be asleep. My impression is that he was as cunning as

a jackdaw, and knew all about it. He felt that we were "playing it rather low down on him" in not having him up on the platform, and consequently he had made up his mind to be even with us and keep his whereabouts a profound secret. At length a more vigorous tug than usual broke the rope, so that direct communications were severed. Then the calf lowed a quiet, derisive chuckle to himself, and laid down to have forty winks. In desperation I threw cartridges at him until my ammunition began to get low, but he refused to acknowledge them, or in any other way hold communication with us. By-and-by the prahns descended again, and tied one of his hind legs some way up the stake. Even the awkwardness of this position did not rouse his spirit. He was the meanest, most idiotic animal I ever encountered. Not a murmur in anger, sorrow, gratitude, or affection could we extract from him. Any other calf would have been proud to receive half as much attention. This brute evidently did not care for sport;

as the Yankees say, he wasn't "on it." Somehow or other, he got disgusted at the start, and he kept disgusted right through. I cannot imagine what the children of Israel could find to worship in a calf.

The moon, which had risen behind, finished her course and set in front of us. Night was wearing away, so I relinquished the watch and obtained a good hour's sleep before daylight. When the first faint streak of dawn tinged the horizon, the prahns awoke me, and I started for camp with a guilty feeling that we had been playing the fool all night. At any rate, I was careful not to mention any of our expedients for making the calf sing. Night watching, on the whole, is slower work, if possible, than punt fishing; at least, such night watching as that which confines you to a platform in a tree.

Newman, when I arrived, was on the point of starting in the canoe on a little reconnaissance up the river, from which he returned with three jungle-cock and a couple of peacocks. Shortly after he left,

H—— appeared, also empty handed; and at length, the sun being high in the heavens, Tip turned out, calm, fresh, and cheerful.

“ Well, how many tigers ? ”

“ No signs of one.”

“ Ah! then I suppose they didn’t ‘ veal ’ well.”

Neither did we after that ; so we left him in the midst of some base insinuation about our “ watching for tigers and praying they wouldn’t come,” and retired to the bamboo house to sleep till breakfast. Tip has been warned that if he unburdens his soul of any more of these infamous puns, his bones will be left to whiten on a foreign strand. This is final, so I am expecting in a few chapters to have to record his untimely demise.

It was all very well to chaff us, but were I so minded I could tell a tale about a certain Nimrod who, on a subsequent occasion, spent the night as we had done. In the midst of his vigil he saw a black cat seated on the bait. Incontinently he fired. The result was that we had some calf for

dinner next day. Cross-examination elicited the fact that the above sportsman took with him a bottle of seductively mixed punch to cheer the waiting hours. It was conjectured that this, in some manner, was connected with the "black cat" illusion. Of course, there may have been a black cat there, but, as the punch-drinking sportsman frankly acknowledged, "He is the only man who has ever seen one in the Siamese jungle."

In the afternoon Tip and I went for a long walk, part of which lay through a beautiful park-like country, dotted with clumps of timber and patches of bush. These seem to be natural aviaries for the parrot tribes. Tip shot what he called "a Siamese albatross of the big parrot kind."

Our camp is pleasantly situated on a high bank, at a point where, for a few hundred yards or so, it is clear of jungle. Just below us the broad shallow river, sweeping rapidly by, is joined by a lesser stream, and then swerves suddenly to the left. A teak forest lines the bank on one side; on the

other there is a thick bamboo jungle, where a colony of black monkeys are constantly engaged in watching us through the delicate, lace-like foliage. Scores of kingfishers ply to and fro ; blue jays with gorgeous plumage, hawks, and an occasional peacock cross and recross the stream. Under a spreading tree, on a tiny terrace, neatly swept and commanding the best view of the river, is our dining-table. And here, in the quiet of evening, when the after-glow is fading out of "dim skies ;" when the filmy curtains of night droop over the landscape, and drowsiness comes to weary nature as sleep to a weary man ; when the far-away cry of the peacock from up some distant reach, and the good-night crow of the jungle fowl, losing their harshness in flattering distance, mingle not unmusically with the monotone mutterings of wood-pigeons in the nearer jungle,—we gather after the day's enjoyment, and dine in luxury. Here, when the twilight hour has fled away, and a flood of moonlight, streaming over the dark teak tree-tops, alights with magic kiss upon

twinkling ripples of the waters, marking with evanescent tracery of silver their flowing darkness; when the soft night wind, lispings amidst leaves and reeds and spear-head grasses, wanders on and on, till at the gates of heaven it sighs forth its gathered tale of peace and is hushed itself in rest;—well, here, even here, we sit through the balmy hours, late into the night, “propose” and “accept” and “mark the king,” or play “chatty rubbers,” soothed by innumerable bouries, cigars, and pipes. In truth, more romantic surroundings could hardly be conceived, and our camp on the Meklong will always be a pleasant memory.

CHAPTER II.

SIAM—*Conclusion.*

“THE prahns are late, and the Governor has prescribed a mild corrective all round,” said Newman next morning, after we had been waiting a short time the arrival of those worthies, in order to start on a projected “drive.”

The prahns were accordingly laid out, faces downwards, in a row upon the ground, and to each man was administered, with the utmost gravity and impartiality, six stern applications of the rattan. A short exhortation upon the moral beauty of punctuality was next delivered by the Governor, in the course of which he took occasion to promise them as much more rattan as they cared to

earn and to assure them that they would mend before that persuasive plant broke.

We then set out, and proceeding some way up stream, landed in the jungle, where the head prahn so stationed us that if any one had fired, it must have been in the direction of some one else. I fancy he was still rather sore from the rattan.

S——'s post was next to mine. I thought it only right to prepare him for sudden death; so I moved down the glade, and broke it gently to him that he was just in my line of fire. He said it was all right—he could get under cover of a teak tree; besides, he had a first-rate shot at Newman, and was bound to pot him.

“I was just wondering when you came,” he said, “what Ward would charge to stuff a vice-consul and set him up nicely in a case, and whether I'd have Newman done full length, or cut off at the waist.”

H—— was placed where he had a rather difficult shot at me. Newman could not have shot any one, except it were by chance a prahn.

Having placed us thus, the natives went off, and, as I imagine, sat down in the shade somewhere to chew betel and chat. A long time elapsed before we heard anything of them, and when at length, with shouts and yells, they did approach us, they drove nothing before them. A drive was then tried on the opposite side of the river, this time with greater success; for with a good shot Newman dropped a fine kwang. Other attempts proved unsuccessful. Newman's kwang was the only beast we saw during the day, or, indeed, throughout the whole trip.

The elephants had not arrived, and now the rival governor, who had been requested to supply them, sent to decline doing so. An expedition to the hills in quest of rhinoceri and kyting* was therefore out of the question. To have ascended the river to the Cheijok Falls, though an interesting trip, on account of the grand scenery, hot springs, and curious old ruins said to exist in their neighbourhood, would, owing to the increasing force of the current above us, have

* Wild buffalo.

been a long and laborious task. Moreover, there would have been great difficulty in obtaining provisions for our crowd of boatmen. It was, therefore, decided to remain a couple of days more in our present camp, and explore the country thoroughly in search of game. Dead bullocks had been stationed in three separate spots in the jungle ever since our arrival, but, though examined every morning, none of them showed signs of having been touched. I am afraid the tigers in this neighbourhood existed only in the Governor's imagination. Undoubtedly there is sport, and, after duly deducting from the tales I heard a fair allowance for exaggeration, I should say grand sport, to be had in Siam. But to obtain it a man must travel alone with his servant and a minimum of baggage—little more, in fact, than his blanket and ammunition. Then, if time is no object to him, and he starts well recommended by the Regent or Kalahom, he will probably be amply repaid for his toil. This we were aware of before we started; besides, we did

not proceed as far as the real game country, and could not therefore expect sport. Farther inland, elephants, rhinoceri, kying, kwang, tigers, leopards, and several kinds of smaller game are to be met with in great numbers. So, not without regret, one sunny morning whilst we were breakfasting, the boats were reladen and we turned back.

Our boatmen were insufferably lazy. The only thing which excited them to any effort was a formula used by Lazarus the cook. It was uttered in a quiet, encouraging manner, and sounded rather euphonious and pretty, besides being very effective. By listening attentively a few times I succeeded in committing the words to memory, and subsequently used them with the greatest success. It occurred to me one day to inquire their meaning. I was horrified to discover that the language I had been using was a masterpiece of the most fearful abuse that even an Eastern language could produce, and the Oriental strength and richness in this particular is as brandy to water compared with invective and vituperation in

the West. Had the female relatives of our boatmen heard me thus encouraging their sons and brethren, my scalp would hardly have appeased their righteous indignation and outraged reputations.

Lazarus is located just behind our little deck-house, and with a small earthen fireplace makes *café noir* for Tip and myself all day long. Lovely scenery, lovely weather, and nothing to do but to lie still and enjoy both; add thereto coffee and tobacco, and what can a man want more! It seems as if it were a sort of boating trip in Paradise; already we may be said to be graduating for the Nirwāna of the Buddhists. The bank scenes pass in panorama before us: here a village fête or La Khon; there a temple, with yellow-clothed talapoins loitering round; anon a funeral procession going to burn the body of the dead. Tiring of doing nothing, you drop quietly down under the banks, and shoot jungle-fowl, or perchance a peacock, and then again return to your idleness or your book.

Thus drifting with the current, halting a

day here and a day there, we found ourselves at length again at Bangkok. Here we remained a fortnight longer, whilst the yacht was preparing for her battle with the China seas. Time, however, did not pass slowly, for a succession of dinners and breakfasts, visits and visitors, together with some good snipe shooting in the paddy-fields near the town, kept the ball rolling until our departure.

One of the most curious of Siamese institutions is that of Second King. Few people hold a more anomalous position in any kingdom. It is one of those things that "no fellow can understand," or, at any rate, give a satisfactory explanation of. Like the idioms of a language, long residence in the country alone will enable strangers to acquire some conception of this remarkable personage's position. He is treated with royal ceremony, and lives separately from the King, in somewhat similar style, but on a scale of less magnificence. His income is derived from the State, and he is supposed to have two thousand soldiery at his command.

Without duties to perform, place in government, recognized power, or definite status, the Second King can only be accounted for by supposing that the title has outlived the objects or functions for which it was created. His situation in Bangkok resembles that of an exiled king in an alien country. The present Second King is uncle to the First King, and is a man of good education and talents.

The Siamese have yet another King—a mock King, elected for three days by the people, during which time they keep holiday, and the real King is supposed to remain in his palace. The whole thing is a rural fête, and is accompanied with superstitious ceremonies to divine the future abundance or scarcity of the harvest.

A strange habit of thinking aloud as they walk along is indulged in by the natives. Frequently in traversing the town with one who understood the language, I was amused with the translations of their mental notes—such trivialities as, for instance, “Three Englishmen walking along, one in the

middle with a white coat on;" or the following remarks of an old lady, translated to me on one occasion when I was returning from snipe shooting in the paddy-fields, wet through, as usual, up to the chest: "Ah! fallen in the water; wet through. Shocking! What a terrible dog! Will he bite me? No."

A wonderful variety in form and design characterizes the coins of Siam. At one time or another almost every known metal appears to have been put in circulation, and as if this diversity was insufficient, coins have even been made of porcelain. I was fortunate enough to see a large and very interesting collection in Bangkok, the property of a German resident. Some of the metal pieces were perforated with elaborate designs. The porcelain coins in many cases are similarly ornamented, and at the same time skilfully coloured. A number of these latter were kindly presented to me by Mr. Kophké, the Danish Consul, an enthusiastic numismatist. The old silver and gold coinage is in the form of balls. The ends of a short bar of silver

or gold are compressed until they meet; the ball is then simply stamped and put in circulation. Lately, owing to the facility for imitation afforded by such rough workmanship, the Government has been induced to call these coins in, and substitute for them a coinage similar to that used in Europe.

Of the interior of Siam there is at present but little known, and that little is of a vague and unsatisfactory description. We were told, I know not with what truth, that in the direction we followed, no European, with the exception of Captain Hill, R.E., had penetrated beyond Canburee. A rich field is here awaiting the naturalist, ornithologist, and botanist; in fact, scientific men of every branch. The philosopher who would contemplate the decline of a nation, and study the problems such a catastrophe presents, could scarcely find a fitter subject than Siam. There is work, too, for the archæologist; for the glory of this people is their past, and the grandeur of its ruined monuments, existing still in various

parts of the country, proves that their ancestors were men of other metal than the effete slaves of to-day—men who trod deeply into time, and whose footprints have not yet been utterly erased, though their character has vanished.

With reference to the ease with which specimens may be obtained by the naturalist, Mr. W——, an American gentleman and former resident in Bangkok, told me an amusing anecdote in San Francisco. A barrel of alcohol was sent out by Professor Agassiz to a friend of his, to be filled with reptiles and returned. As this friend was on the point of leaving Bangkok, he begged Mr. W—— to attend to the matter. When the alcohol arrived, therefore, he told his servants to set some little boys to work to catch snakes, lizards, toads—in fact, any unclean things they could find—bring them to the house, and drop them into the alcohol. They were to receive a small coin for each specimen. The news soon spread, and in an hour or two the barrel was filled. But all the little vagabonds in

the neighbourhood were aroused, and shoals of little boys arrived every minute, each bearing some hideous monster in a split stick. Finding that they were no longer needed, they simply dropped them in the garden, so that in a very short time the whole place was alive with reptiles. They got into the house, upstairs, downstairs, under the beds, chairs, mattings, and pillows, and into every available chink and corner. "I had to evacuate the place, and a troop of little boys were engaged for weeks afterwards catching them again," said W——. "I couldn't move without scaring up a snake or a lizard. There were slimy tracks all over the floors. If I looked up suddenly, there was a big toad gaping at me in a corner, or a tokai scuttling across the table. You bet the next man that asks me to collect reptiles for him won't remain long in doubt. No, sir!"

In the great flood of Chinese emigration that has risen and overwhelmed them, the Siamese are rapidly being extinguished. Nearly the whole of the trade, as well

as what may be called the agricultural interest, is in the hands of their invaders. They have overrun the country and are absorbing the inhabitants. Chinese women rarely quit their own country. The emigrants therefore take unto themselves Siamese wives, and as they are more wealthy, and bear the reputation of being better husbands than the native men, they naturally obtain the pick of their women; for money rules the matrimonial market as much in Siam as elsewhere. As might naturally be expected, the offspring of these marriages are more influenced in character by the stronger mind and intensely national characteristics of the father, than by the altogether weaker nature of the mother. Here, then, is a feature unusual in Chinese emigration. The Celestials are taking root in the soil they have adopted, and to the consequences nations they come in contact with under such circumstances must inevitably risk by reason of their marvellous frugality, industry, and perseverance, is in this instance superadded the very grave

question of intermarriage. Not only are they slowly starving the Siamese out of their own country, but at the same time, by maintaining a constant selection of the best and healthiest of the indigenous women, they arrest the increase of the Siamese population, and divert the best blood of the nation to augment their own numbers and strengthen their own ties and position. One can but gaze at the vast wave of Chinese emigration that with increasing volume rolls from her overpopulated homes, where "man is a weed"—but a weed possessed of rare qualities—and wonder what will be its results. When and where will Muscovite and Mongol, after silently digesting the lesser nations of the earth, meet and measure their at length fully developed strength? China must awake from her torpor sooner or later. Like a volcano that has slumbered for ages, she is looked upon as harmless. It is a work of time to set in motion the machinery of so vast and inert a mass; but noting the numbers of her people

that now annually seek foreign shores, it would seem that the lesser wheels are beginning slowly to revolve. As a people the Chinese may lack ambition; the ideas that would render them dangerous may not yet be developed; they may yet be ignorant of their strength. A little learning, though, and a few restless spirits will suffice to impart the impetus they require, and once the motive power is gained, once roused, the rest follows easily. In China humanity has reached its most economic stage. The greatest amount of brain power, labour, industry, and perseverance—in short, the best human machine is there produced and supported at the least expense. These are important considerations when they apply to over two hundred and fifty millions of people. The Mongol will be among the problems of the future.

Returning to our subject: meanwhile the effete and worn-out Siamese of the upper classes, as if to accelerate their disappearance, sink their individuality in new

fashions and fresh customs, casting aside without consideration the dress and ways of their forefathers. In dress they have effected a compromise, and still cling to the parnung, although they wear European hats, shirts, boots, etc., and no longer partially shave their heads so as to leave the formerly orthodox tuft. The result of this attempted assimilation is ludicrous in the extreme. However, it may be expected that in a short time the parnung also will be discarded in favour of the inelegant tight trousers of civilization. They will adopt the whole costume—

“And live, with all their lordly speeches,
The slaves of buttons and tight breeches.”

Like children they crave for any novelty, and being possessed of it, like children, cast it aside. Houses are built and allowed to go to ruin; steam launches are bought, and in every creek they may be seen, lying where they have lain since they were “new,” rusting and rotting for want of care and use. Gunboats and public works suffer the same fate. Siam is a land of

decay. The population (Siamese) is decreasing; the government is rotten, the administration a recognized instrument of extortion. They take no thought for the morrow; to procure sufficient for immediate necessities is their sole object. Whence this is derived, how, or at what expense to the people, matters not. The present King has between forty and fifty brothers alive; these princes, together with a host of nobles, all live by preying on the people. An illustration of the state of the country may be gathered from the official mode of describing the appointment of a Governor. It is said that he has been given such or such a town or district to "eat." If the nation suffered from temporary abuses and prostration, such as at some future time might culminate in civil disturbances and be shaken off by a vigorous self-assertion of the lower classes, the case would still be hopeful. But there is no vitality or vigour left in the race. The childish frivolity and narrow-minded weaknesses of the upper classes are only equalled by the unconquerable indifference

and lethargic indolence of the lower orders. The presence of the Chinese was not necessary to effect their dissolution.

Siam, in minerals, jewels, forests, and agricultural lands, is enormously rich. Yet amidst all these sources of wealth, for lack of a little energy and industry, the native population live from hand to mouth in abject misery. The purest gold ore has been found repeatedly here; with grand rivers traversing the whole country to the sea, their magnificent forests of ship-building timber are scarcely touched; they might grow rice for the world, to say nothing of sugar, coffee, tobacco, and spices; whilst their mines of precious stones have long been proverbial for their value and extent. But the Siamese, at any rate, will never develop the resources of their country. Their tenancy as rulers may linger, but it cannot last; even now it is a shadow without substance, and they rule only on sufferance.

“The spider has woven her web in the imperial towers;
The owl hath sung her watch-song on the towers of
Afrasiab.”

CHAPTER III.

CHENTABUN.

THE yacht left Bangkok a few days before we did, and lay outside the bar awaiting us. We followed in the Chentabun steamer, her captain being good enough to lie to whilst the boats fetched us off. As we did not start until next day, three or four acquaintances came down to see us off; they slept on board, and returned to Bangkok the following morning by the post boat.

About mid-day the yacht got under way, and steamed to the mouth of the Chentabun river, arriving there next morning. Mr. Gould, of the Consulate, accompanied us, with the intention of spending Christmas on board and remaining in Chentabun for

a fortnight after we left. The little bay in which we anchored was remarkably pretty. With its wooded bluffs and tiny wooded island, it strongly resembled a bit of Loch Lomond—an idea which was fostered by the view of a grand hill in the background not unlike the great Ben itself. After breakfast the steam launch was lowered, and we went for a short cruise up the river, taking the guns with us, in case we should chance on a likely spot for snipe. The mouth of the river is full of fish traps, some of large dimensions, built of bamboos on the same principle as duck decoys. About three miles up stream we fell in with the Chentabun steamer. She had discharged cargo and passengers, and had on board a herd of miners from the lately discovered sapphire and ruby mines. They gave a very miserable account of the state of things there. Men, they said, were dying like sheep of fever and dysentery. They had no doctors or medicines. No Europeans were there, and it would be certain death for them to attempt to work

there. We saw a few stones, but none of value, as the miners all had their packets sealed up and stowed carefully away. They were a wonderfully picturesque, cut-throat looking lot of ruffians, far too suspicious of one another to bring out and exhibit what they really possessed.

The following morning we started on a foraging expedition to Chentabun, which lies about fifteen miles up stream. On the whole, the scenery was uninteresting and disappointing. We were accompanied by the old Governor of Paknam, a village at the mouth of the river. Our first care was to deliver our letters from the Foreign Minister to the Governor. These insured us a civil reception. He expressed great curiosity with regard to the yacht, particularly when he of Paknam told his superior "it was a vessel that did not trade, and inside it was like a beautiful house."

"It does not trade!" he exclaimed in wonder. "Then her captain must be very rich. Has he many wives on board?"

“None at all.”

“What, no wives? Not one?” and the Governor’s eyes threatened to join as they expanded. “Why does he not carry them with him?”

We explained that he had none. But a “captain” who was so rich that he did not want to trade, and yet had no wives, was a creature beyond his comprehension. At last he found a solution for the problem.

“I have heard that in your country girls choose their own husbands and marry whom they please. Is it not so?”

We assented.

“Perhaps, then, your captain” (H—— was not with us) “is so little handsome that no girl would choose. But he can buy a wife here for a hundred tickals, and he can choose for himself.”

What struck the Governor most in Paknam’s account of the yacht was an allusion to a *coco de mer* he had seen on board. He of Paknam was bidden to describe it, and this he very delicately did by saying that it was “a thing you

could not show to a child." His description of the hippopotami skulls completed the charm, and the Governor begged to be allowed to visit the yacht and see her eccentric owner and the wonderful things he possessed. We then returned to the launch and passed up the river to the town.

There are no absolutely floating houses here, but the banks are lined with huts built on piles. The inhabitants are almost entirely Cochin Chinese, and differ considerably in cast of countenance from the Siamese, their features exhibiting a more decidedly Mongolian character. Many of the girls, though not absolutely pretty, might, if beauty were measured by "carats"—as, according to Marco Polo, it was in choosing the "Great Khan's" wives—perhaps be styled ten-carat beauties, twenty-two carats being accepted as the maximum. Their time is chiefly employed in the manufacture of matting, in which art they particularly excel.

Whilst we lunched, our fellows went off,

with Gould's native servants, to hunt up ducks, fowls, and beef. In this they signally failed; there was literally nothing to be had, so we were forced to leave the matter in the hands of the Governor, and trust to him to send us down provisions. Owing to the proximity of the mines, the scarcity and price of wives has become almost as alarming as that of food. With the proverbial recklessness of miners, the lucky Tongzus and Burmese have rushed eagerly into matrimony, and have paid what are accounted alarming sums, in this country, for their accomplices in the terrible act. A respectable young man of moderate means, who was formerly a "catch" in the matrimonial market, is now obliged to pine in single blessedness.

The French Jesuits have long had a missionary station established here. After lunch we visited and had a chat with the fathers. They informed us, with some exultation, that nearly half the population were Christians. If, as they appeared to think, their souls were purified, their bodies cer-

tainly were not. Christian and Buddhist were equally dirty, and a little more baptism would have done neither of them any harm. One of the fathers, a fine picture of the old village shepherd, had resided in Chentabun for more than forty years, and intended to end his days there.

“Oui, monsieur,” he said; “la ou j’ai travaillé je mourrai; ma seule esperance, et ce que je prie du bon Dieu tous les jours, c’est d’être permi, quand je quitté Chentabun, de passer pas voie de ciel.”

On the return journey I shot a curlew and a couple of kingfishers. Early next morning—we called it by courtesy “at sunrise”—Gould and I went ashore for a tramp with the guns. At Paknam we enlisted a few followers for retrievers, and walked for three or four miles in and about a swamp near the coast, where we bagged a few odd snipe and plover. We then turned our steps towards the beach. The tide was out, and sea-birds were flocking in thousands on the mud flats. Stationing ourselves under cover of a mangrove

swamp, in less than three quarters of an hour we killed twenty-two brace of birds by simply waiting for them as they swooped up and down past us. Our followers were then sent to gather up the slain, and as breakfast-time was looming in the distance and the heat had become very oppressive, we started to walk back to the landing-place. Returning to the yacht, we stopped at the tiny picture-like island in the bay, for a plunge off the rocks into the crystal-clear waters below them—a luxury we paid for dearly with blistered backs and shoulders, although neither of us remained more than a few minutes in the water. So much for Christmas Eve. When the bag was laid out on deck, twenty-five and a half brace of all sorts were counted.

Christmas Day—

“Poor men, when Yule is cold,
Must be content to sit by little fires.”

That would they easily, and the smaller the better, if their Yule-tide were spent in these climes. To-day is one of the hottest

days I ever experienced. In the lightest of light clothes, and as few of them as possible, we have found the heat almost insupportable, lounging the time away under the deck awnings. By a curious coincidence, this is the second Christmas Day H—— has spent in this out-of-the-way corner of the world.

On turning out this morning, we found the yacht gaily dressed with bunches of green stuff, and the saloon decorated in true Christmas style, lacking, however, the familiar berries and mistletoe. A Christmas card, with its usual kindly greeting, faced each of us on the breakfast plates. They were the productions of Paul, the fo'k'sle genius, wit, bandmaster, artist, "great comique," and officers' steward. Each had for its subject some humorously treated incident of the voyage. Joe's stump tail was tied up of blue ribbons, and a collar of leaves graced his short neck. He wore both under protest, as he was too languid and lackadaisical, owing to the heat, to attempt to remove them.

The fo'k'sle band not having been heard lately, I asked Paul yesterday what had befallen it.

"Well, sir," he said, "the fact is the cockroaches are too fond of music. One big chap has gone and died of joy by himself inside the cornet-à-piston. We've been trying to get him out and have a funeral, but he's opposed to the ceremony. Then there's a regular nation of 'em got into the concertina. They're living on the leather inside, waiting for me to play to 'em. I did the other day, and you could hear 'em go scrunch, scrunch every note. As to the big drum, they've eaten a hole in it you could put your head in. It was proposed to blast that chap out of the cornet-à-piston with a little gunpowder. You see, it's Christmas Day to-morrow, sir, and we must have the instruments ready."

I suppose these difficulties were eventually overcome, for music and singing commenced at an early hour this morning, and continued, with but slight intermission, throughout the day. To do the

men justice, I may say that not the slightest advantage was taken of the liquor and licence allowed them. They behaved remarkably well, striking that happy medium of a sailor's enjoyment to which we may apply Denham's lines on the Thames, "Strong without rage, without overflowing full."

Most of the men spoke Gaelic, and often sang their national songs. Gould was curious to hear one, so after dinner H— sent up to tell the men who were singing on deck to favour us with a Gaelic song. After a good deal of preliminary coughing, a dismal droning repetition of what sounded like "O mi nincum barney" was heard outside the skylight. Suddenly the bashful songster stopped, and Paul was heard exhorting him in an undertone to "steam ahead and give us the funny part over again." However, they could get no more out of him; so Paul himself caught up the tune with his concertina, and, inventing his own words or gibberish, gave a capital imitation of the song. The solemn

Scot listened attentively to the end, then we heard him seriously object, "That's no Gaelic, I'll swear."

We parted reluctantly with Gould next morning. Sternly pleading the calls of that insatiable monster "duty," he refused to continue the passage with us to Hong Kong. It was a moot point whether or no we should kidnap him, but being unacquainted with the exact nature of the penalties that would attend the forcible abduction of one of Her Britannic Majesty's consular officers, the idea was abandoned, and he was allowed to depart for Chentabun in a boat sent by the Governor.

Soon after mid-day the yacht weighed anchor, and headed for the Paliwan Passage. The weather now clouded over. We had November skies (*à l'Anglais*), accompanied by rain and squalls, the latter frequently heavy. Now and then a fine day occurred, the sun showed out, and again we could live in comfort upon deck. But the fine days seemed only like farewell messages from the summer climates we were leaving, and

every day sunny hours grew rarer, and the weather colder and more dismal. For three days, it was on one occasion impossible to take observations, and this in a passage that abounded with reefs. Fortunately on the fourth day the sun broke, and the Swallow Reef was discovered half a mile off on our port bow.

Soon after this H—— relinquished his intention of visiting Hong Kong, and determined to make directly for Nagasaki. The yacht's course was therefore altered, and she steamed through the San Bernadino Channel. Here we had smooth seas and a couple of fine days. The scenery amongst the Luzons was very charming, and the evenings were particularly delightful. Delicately clouded skies of pearly grey were above us, tinged faintly with the roseate flush of setting sun. The seas were grey, too, and peacefully calm, whilst here and there on the rippled lines, as they rose and fell, a fleeting reflection of the rosy sunlight might be caught. All around the wooded islands, dark and

shadowy, enclosed us as in a vast lake. It was summer come again. The densely wooded mountains and rocky bluffs of Romblon were very fine. A large village with a missionary church on the coast almost induced us to lie to and land, but in the long line of white breakers that extended across the mouth of the bay no entry could be discerned, and so, as time was precious, owing to the fact that in provisioning the yacht before leaving Bangkok only the shorter voyage to Hong Kong had been contemplated, we held on our way, and in a short time felt the broad swell of the Pacific again. Swiftly the islands receded on our quarter. The white water-line vanished. The mountains waxed purple and hazy, growing gradually fainter in colour, till their dim peaks only were visible. At length they also became lost to view, and we were left fairly alone to battle with the north-west monsoon on our way to Japan. From this point until our arrival in Nagasaki it was one endless thump, thump, thump,

as the vessel pitched in the heavy head seas she encountered. It was a severe trial for any yacht, but the *Witch* is a grand sea-boat, and she behaved admirably.

Numerous squalls varied the monotony of the voyage. Occasionally they were very heavy. There is something strangely fascinating in watching the gathering of a squall at sea. On the horizon the small dark cloud at first is hardly noticeable. Rapidly, but imperceptibly, it gains in darkness and volume. For a little space, although advancing, the lowering mass appears to remain stationary. Then through the rigging breaks the rush of wind with a low roaring sound, increasing steadily in power, and in a second, preceded by drifting clouds of rain, the squall is upon you. Suddenly the atmosphere is darkened. In the blinding rain the eye cannot penetrate beyond a few yards from the ship's side. Above the whirl of wind and the fierce-seething hiss of waters, the shouted orders—though he who gives them be standing next to you—can scarcely be dis-

tinguished. The heavy swell of waves that, but a few moments past, rose higher than the bulwarks, is beaten down by sheer force into rugged troughs, and the ocean as it were, lashed and shrinking, cowers beneath the irresistible majesty of the squall. Caught from the boiling whiteness all around, the salt sea-spray is dashed with stinging fury over everything. Momentarily you are forced to turn away from it. No longer does the vessel toss and bound freely over broad rolling billows. With unnatural lack of motion, she labours and groans as if struggling in agony against some mighty power. The squall has come up on her starboard bow, and she seems hardly to move through the water. Down the lee scuppers the rain rushes in torrents; the decks are a sheet of water. Another burst, stronger than all it seems, and then the squall slowly declines, or rather passes us in its march over the ocean. The air clears, a reef or two is shaken out of the sail, and the yacht continues her course.

CHAPTER IV.

NAGASAKI (JAPAN).

FIFTEEN hours' steaming concluded the passage to Nagasaki. The entrance to the harbour bears a strong resemblance to Dartmouth, and is strikingly pretty. As usual, the moment anchor was dropped we were boarded by a crowd of touts, tradesmen, and such-like licensed pirates. Turn where you would, a snub-nosed, high-cheek-boned, Europeanized loafer, like a Scotch fishwife in breeches, was on the point of thrusting upon you a packet of dirty certificates. Useless to say you did not wash, you never employed a tailor, you made your own boots, or mildly to hint that you had already concluded arrangements for a complete

outfit from Nagasaki. They wanted to know who had the order.

“Who you go? Chi yaki? Ah, him bad man—rob. Oh, very bad. I give you ting more half cheap.”

Nothing availed short of exclaiming in the strain of the philanthropist, “I give thee *orders*? I would see thee d——d first.” But even touts tire in course of time, and by breakfast all had vanished, with the exception of one melancholy individual, who, leaning his head pensively on the tips of his fingers, paced the deck silently and alone for some hours.

Were Nagasaki in the Mediterranean it would be raved about. We should be recommended to “see Nagasaki and die,” or follow some equally sensible course. But it is in Japan, not in Italy, and in scenery, as in pictures, names are of more account than merit. One of the few independent men in this respect that I have ever met was an old Scotchman. We were entering the bay of Naples on a Messageries boat, and some ladies, with the assistance of a

guide-book, were explaining to him its beauty.

“Humph!” said the old gentleman, who evidently had to undergo a yearly trip of this kind. “It’s varra foine. Have we seen this befoore?”

“Oh no. The last time,” etc., etc.

“Ah, it’s varra foine. It’s like Brodick Bay in Arran.”

A chorus of horror from the ladies at this rank heresy, and quotations from the guide-book to prove that Naples was immeasurably finer than anything else in the world, did not in the slightest degree alter his opinion.

“Sae it may be,” said he—“sae it may be, but Brodick Bay is varra foine too.”

Nagasaki in summer must be delightful. Even now, when ascetic winter has stripped the country of all its gayer colours, when hills are bleak and trees for the most part shiver with naked branches in the cutting wind, the land-locked harbour is still wonderfully pretty. All, or nearly all, round the water’s edge are houses. The main town lies on the north-east shore of the bay.

Above, the steep hills are covered, like chessboards, with patches and tiny terraces cut in the sides for cultivation. In many places these climb to the very summits, and I am told that they raise two crops a year on them. At present they are mostly bare, but here and there a bright square of spring green relieves the winter tones and stands out like light in darkness.

Her Majesty's ships *Charybdis* and *Pegasus* were lying in harbour when we arrived. A boat from the former soon boarded the yacht. Later on, her commander, Captain Hotham, paid us a visit. He was just completing his third year on the station, so he was in a position to give us much information and several valuable hints with regard to curio hunting.

The morning had been miserable, sleet, snow, and heavy mists alternating, but in the afternoon it cleared, and we went for a run ashore. H—— climbed the hill to the temple of the Bronze Horse with Captain Hotham and Commander the Hon. H. W. Hood, of the *Pegasus*. S—— and

I made a general reconnaissance of the town. The moment we landed we were surrounded by a crowd of jinriksha men, in the shafts of their light bath chairs. S—— “vetted them over,” as he termed it, felt one man’s legs, which amused the rest intensely, and finally chose a fellow with very big calves. My man, though smaller, showed more class. Off they went at a rapid trot, which was not decreased in pace by Joe making playful feints at their ankles and barking gleefully around.

We soon found the house of Narabash, the interpreter recommended to us. He himself happened at the time to be out, but his wife received us, and in a few words of broken English informed us that her husband would speedily return. In the mean while she conducted us into a beautifully neat little Japanese room. Cushions were spread for us near the hibatchi. Presently two girls entered and began to make us tea over its charcoal embers.

“Faith,” said Tip, “they’re mighty polite in this country with their afternoon tea!”

Occasionally they stole shy glances at the strangers. Narabash's daughters, we mentally concluded. However, subsequently we found that we were mistaken. The tea made, they offered it, still shyly, but with charming grace, and—remained. One, seated by the hibatchi, played idly with its chopstick fire-irons; the other, standing near her, occupied her pretty fingers with a fan. She was very attractive, this girl. Taller than the average of Japanese maidens, and slim, with, as far as her coquettish little costume would allow one to judge, a figure lithe and straight as a reed. Pretty hands—too, she had—plump little childlike hands—and a child's round neck, marked with Venus's necklace; cheeks soft and creamy as a tea-rose, tinged with the faintest *soupeçon* of rose colour; a rounded chin with dimpled front; a dainty little mouth that, opened half in wonder as she gazed at us, revealed the whitest teeth; and eyes—oh! the long Eastern eyes, dark and fathomless, “deep as deep flowers and dreamy like dim skies.” There

was such an air of shyness and innate modesty about this blooming Hebe, that to have imputed an impure thought to her would have seemed almost sacrilege. She was young, too—sixteen, at the most, her age—and yet, alas! all delicacy was superfluous. Our neat-handed Phillis and her scarcely less beautiful companion were, as Mrs. Grundy would say, “no better than they ought to be.”

In due course the dragoman arrived. He was a fair type of his kind, useful, active, and unscrupulous.

I know some *lacquer* fair to see.

* * * * *

Beware, beware !

Trust him not,

He is fooling thee.

Still he was intelligent and less difficult to deal with than the majority of his class, and when detected in the “lie with a circumstance,” he acknowledged his error with the utmost suavity and grace. *Au reste*, his finished roguery was amusing to witness. Try him if ever you go to

Nagasaki. It is impossible, in a short visit there, to buy good curios without a guide, as all those of any value are scattered about in private houses or pawnshops. Narabash will produce or take you to see any number of them. For aught I know to the contrary, he may, in the first instance, have planted them out himself, in order to inspire confidence in their value and authenticity. But that matters not. Offer your own price, at most a third of his; at same time make up your mind that somehow or other you are still sure to be imposed upon; in buying curios in Japan you will then be seldom disappointed.

Under the guidance of Narabash we perambulated the town, returning afterwards to his own place to see a few things he had hurriedly sent for. For a town of its class—that is, of wooden houses, with a more or less primitive system of drainage—Nagasaki is a marvel of cleanliness and neatness. There is a certain quaint, old-fashioned simplicity about the place and people that is delightful. The open,

windowless shops, with diversified stock tastefully arranged on low platforms and surrounding shelves; the respectably clothed shopkeepers, seated working, account-making, smoking, or quietly chatting whilst they gather closely round the hibatchis to warm their hands; the coloured paper-hangings, white-paper partitions, and windows on neat sliding frameworks; the clean matting and general air of prosperity and comfort, form altogether a pleasing picture. At night the scene is gaily illuminated, for the shops remain open until late, and their lighted lanterns, together with those of the jinriksha men flying swiftly to and fro, and of the foot passengers shuffling along on clogs, create quite a picturesque effect.

The morning succeeding our arrival we were shown over the *Charybdis* by Captain Hotham. In the navy no less than in the army, do they complain of the youthfulness of the men. On Her Majesty's ships *Charybdis* and *Pegasus* the failing was even more marked than common, because lying near

them were both Russian and German men-of-war. Side by side with those burly and level crews of men, the English boys could not but show to disadvantage. Captain Hotham told me that a short time before, he had calculated the average age of the men on board his ship, and had found it to be a few weeks over nineteen. This sounds absurd. Unfortunately, it is too true; nor is it by any means a peculiar case. No doubt, in the Mediterranean fleet we have finer crews, but they are picked men, and even there we look in vain for the old sea dogs who created and sustained the reputation of the British navy. Her Majesty's ships are so many schools of discipline, through which if any man can pass with anything like a character, he is eagerly sought after for civil posts and employments. And such is the system adopted that he receives no inducement to continue in the navy when the time of service expires; in fact, by doing so he risks the pension he already has acquired. Moreover, the manner in which the recruiting is carried

out is much complained of. In order to economize, recruiting for the navy is performed by the marines. They recruit almost exclusively in the large towns. The class of boy thus obtained is vastly inferior to the fine sturdy youngster of the country, free from hereditary disease, and free also from that invincible predilection for lying and thieving which is rooted in the character of the street Arab.

When we returned to the yacht we found that Narabash had arrived with a boat-load of miscellaneous curiosities. They were arranged on every available spot in the saloon, the boxes that had contained them covering the floor. Kagga tea services, Imari bowls and dishes, Cloisonné vases and plates, Satsuma jugs and figures; gold lacquer, black lacquer, and green lacquer from the north, in the shape of cabinets and medicine chests; long, square, deep, shallow, oblong, oval, round, fan-shaped, scalloped boxes, and boxes of every kind; trays and chow-chow boxes, swords and silk paintings, screens, picture books and

picture scrolls (some of which, called "fun books," would have shocked even Holywell Street), steel mirrors and ivory carvings, suits of armour and bronzes, knives and tortoiseshell ornaments, carved bamboo tobacco pots and vases, silk handkerchiefs and dresses, etc.; in fact, a collection as miscellaneous as it was interesting. We examined and studied and bargained and bought for hours. Narabash was in great feather. He snickered and chattered, and swindled and perjured himself to a surprising extent. Everything he had to dispose of was of the most ancient and valuable description. As he would say when he produced something, "Ver old, oh, ver old indeet. I gif you guarantee. Suppose you go Yokohama—you ask—make 'quiry. All person know me." Probably they had some cause to.

"And how much is this, Narabash?" one of us would ask, taking up a china pot or piece of lacquer.

Narabash would hazard a comprehensive side-glance at his audience, in order to

judge how strong a dose he might venture to prescribe. If we looked incredulous and indifferent, he generally looked doubtful and indifferent himself, and, turning the object carelessly over in his fingers, would say, "Dat? Oh, I tink not so old dat. Old, but not so old. P'r'aps feefty year. Can't say quite, p'r'aps more." If, on the other hand, he detected any signs of admiration or covetousness, he launched out boldly into the dim mist of past ages. "Oh, dat ver old. I tink not often get so old dat. Dat four—no, five hundred year;" and he glibly added another hundred years to the age, and five dollars more to the price, because we looked feasible. Once he ventured as far as a thousand years, but he had the grace to acknowledge that although the article in question (a lacquer box) was probably much older even, it might possibly be a few years younger.

Imari ware had much to answer for. Any old bit of chipped and disfigured rubbish that he could find no other name for was "old Imari," or "kind old Imari—Imari

sort not quite—but ver old.” He described most of the lacquer he showed us as having “belong Tycoon. Tycoon make present my father. My father doctor;” or else “Tycoon make present Jāpan gentleman. Gentleman he come poor; he put cabinet pawn man; pawn man ask me, can sell? I not common curio man; I—I” (here he refers to the dictionary, for the following word always puzzled him, although used frequently) — “I—I con-conni-connisseeur. Jāpan gentleman ask me sell—see?” Needless to say, we did see.

To one entirely new to it, the incessant bargaining is disgusting and intolerably wearisome. Unfortunately, the only alternative is to pay three or four times as much for everything as you would otherwise require to. It is remarkable, when this is realized, how rapidly even the most indifferent become alive to the advantages of a little chaffering. Soon what was formerly an annoyance becomes an amusement, the amusement grows into a habit, and before long, not unfrequently, you

surprise yourself discussing seriously a difference in price which a short time previously you would have regarded as unworthy of notice. It carries one back to the bazaars in the East, and brings up a crowd of pleasant recollections.

Whilst at Nagasaki we visited, under Narabash's guidance, the houses of several of his Japan gentlemen who had curios to dispose of. Whether they combined pawnbroking with their other business, I am unable to say. Appearances, however, were certainly in favour of the supposition. We were usually shown through the shop, or office on the ground floor, and conducted upstairs, where mats or cushions were spread for us near the hibatchis. The master or mistress (sometimes the latter was charmingly pretty) of the house then proceeded to make tea, over the small heap of lighted charcoal, in the toy utensils they use for this purpose. Narabash always swore that the tea cost from eight to twelve dollars a pound, but he was such a finished liar that I hardly like to

quote him as an authority. Cakes were handed round, and finally the curios were produced, one by one, from their many coverings of wool, cloths, paper, and boxes. At one place we saw a remarkably handsome pair of swords, formerly the property of the Tycoon, and marked with his crest—three golden heart-shaped leaves in a circlet. For these they asked fifteen hundred dollars, which, even taking into consideration the heavy gold decoration expended upon them, seemed a long price. Elsewhere we saw a fine collection of old gold Japanese coins. These were chiefly remarkable for their enormous size; indeed, some of the larger gold itcheboos, with their edges slightly turned up, would make pretty little card dishes. It would be impossible, even were it not wearisome to the reader, to describe a tithe of the many handsome things these visits afforded us an opportunity of seeing. The exquisite fineness and delicacy of work, the perfect finish, the artistic talent so lavishly displayed in all that is really old and good in

Japanese art, commands the most genuine admiration, and one lingers over these frail lacquer boxes with surpassingly beautiful designs, and richly coloured, daintily worked, and not less beautifully designed old china, no longer wondering that the former are worth more than their weight in gold, the latter more than they could contain of silver.

The interiors of Japanese houses are wonderfully cleanly. Before quitting the little paved entrance, we were invariably requested to remove our boots. Fortunately the inmates were always willing to compromise matters by allowing us to pass, after they had been polished with cloths; for, as we made our excursions in jinrikshas, they were never dirty, and to have buttoned and unbuttoned boots a dozen or more times in the course of the day would have damped our curiosity considerably. The fittings and narrow ladder-like staircase are of dark polished wood; the rafters are generally of split bamboo. With the exception of the mats, everything is

paper—paper walls, paper doors, paper windows. As the walls are on the principle of sliding doors, it is possible to convert two or three rooms into one, or even in a few moments to throw open the whole of one flat or story, whilst a window or door can be opened promiscuously in almost any part of the room. To live in houses like these, where the lightest whisper can be heard from end to end, and neighbours can know and hear almost every occurrence that is talked of, must place a beneficent check upon the unruly member. Perhaps not a little of the gentleness and perfect manners of the Japanese might be traced to the fact of thus perpetually dwelling within the public earshot. The matting which, with but slight variation in quality, is found in every house from the lowest to the highest, is manufactured of rice straw, loose layers of straw being placed beneath it. It looks the picture of simplicity and cleanliness; nevertheless, I am told that European travellers up country find it advisable, as they have to sleep on

it, to carry with them a bottle of Keating's insect powder. Cold and cheerless though they may be in winter, in summer these houses, with their verandahs and little grotto-like gardens, must be charming. Indeed, Japan appears to me altogether a summer country, and were I again to visit it, summer would be the season I should choose to spend there.

Nagasaki, as yet, owes its importance chiefly to the coal mines in its vicinity. Under French engineers the Japanese have lately built a fine dock here. Captain Hotham kindly volunteered to call for us one morning and take us to see it. "Boat from the *Charybdis* coming alongside, sir;" and going on deck we see the measured oars of the white man-o'-war's boat, gliding swiftly over the rippling bay. Ten minutes' row brought us to the dock. In it there was a Russian corvette being stripped of its zinc sheathing, which had rusted away to the thinness of paper. She was a fine-looking craft, and is said both to steam and sail well, a combination only too rare

in our own navy. Her crew of fine, brawny, full-grown men gave rise to such comparisons as I have before alluded to—comparisons exceedingly unpleasant to one's national pride. Docks, I confess, do not greatly interest me; this, however, is supposed to be unusually handsome and well finished.

In the course of the day we went for our usual round with Narabash, and visited, amongst other places, the establishment of the principal tortoiseshell worker in Japan. His work was by far the handsomest of the kind any of us had seen. A box he had in the shape of a large fish was a perfect work of art, and, apart from the beauty of the shell, was admirable in modelling, and in the accuracy of every detail, even to the adjustment of light and dark shell in order to imitate shading. Bird-cages, trays, boxes, vases, and a host of minor objects filled the show-room. Amongst other things, we ordered sets of brush backs, etc., to furnish dressing-bags with, which Iyaki made from patterns very quickly and well.

We had arranged this afternoon to experiment on a Japanese dinner. To complete the entertainment, musicians and dancing girls were to be in attendance. On quitting Iyaki's we accordingly made our way to the eating house, and were introduced into a large bare upper chamber. The windows were opened to admit more light, admitting at the same time a cutting wind from the bay. Rugs for us to sit upon, and hibatchis, were brought. The dinner speedily followed, borne in innumerable little bowls by an almost equal number of servants, who not only brought it for us, but were good enough also to eat it. As far as I was able to discover, the courses consisted almost entirely of various kinds of fish—one dish of half-dried raw fish, served with a hot condiment of some sort, was excellent. For the sake of *gourmêts*, I shall always regret not having procured the recipe. Sweets, dried and preserved fruits, and cakes were handed about indiscriminately throughout the repast. The drinks were the bitter straw-coloured Japa-

nese tea, and saki—the national intoxicator, a beverage somewhat resembling dry sherry in taste. Had the dinner taken place at an eating hour we might have done greater execution; as it was, we did little more than cautiously taste.

The dancing was a failure. It was of a style that would have admitted the exhibition of much quiet elegance and grace in gesture and movement. Unfortunately there was no poetry of motion, no swimming ease, no lightness displayed in the evolutions of our *danseuses*. “Muse of the many twinkling feet!” what manner of damsels were these? They were heavy and awkward in every action. When they did move, it was upon their heels, and their antics and gambollings were such as would not have been remarkable for their playfulness even in a young calf. As for their management of the fan (which in the hands of an artiste would have lent considerably to the charm of such slow dancing), no ordinary English girl could have wielded it to less advantage, and an English girl with

a fan is generally as unhappy as an English boy with an eye-glass. Nor were we more fortunate in our music. The dancing was accompanied by girls who sang and strummed on a kind of banjo, the strings of which they struck, not with the fingers, but with a chisel-shaped ivory instrument. Their voices were the shrillest I ever heard. Possibly they possessed charms to soothe the Japanese breast, but if such were the case, its normal condition must be a most fearful state of unrest. We took the opportunity, when they paused for a little applause, to beg them to join in the more peaceful occupation of eating. This they were obliging enough to do, and the rest of the music was deferred by mutual agreement until we should visit Japan again. All the girls were pretty. Were it not that they had disfigured themselves with sundry coatings of paint and powder, that formed a superficial mask the extent of which was clearly visible, they would have been more attractive still. Powdering and painting are extensively practised by Japa-

nese damsels. This relic of barbarism is not by any means confined to Western beauties, but is a custom that, with wonderful vitality, seems to linger amongst the female sex from one end of the world to the other.

It had been decided to start on the following day; the yacht, however, was not quite ready for sea, so our departure was postponed until the succeeding morning. Sleet and snow ushered in the coldest day that had been experienced here during the year. Towards afternoon it cleared up, and I went to visit the temple of the Bronze Horse. Like most Shintoo temples, it is situated on a wooded hill. The approach to it is terminated by about two hundred steps, arched over at intervals by *tauri*. Passing through the courtyard, tenanted by the Bronze Horse, there is a short ascent of steps leading to the shrine. I was not allowed to enter, or I should have been glad to examine more nearly two large and apparently elaborate Japanese pictures hanging in the chancel. Beyond them

lay a dim aisle, and in gloomy indistinctness, broken by the faint glint of gilt and lacquer, was the sombre shadow-haunted shrine of the Japanese god. I sat down on the steps, to rest for a moment. Below me lay the busy town with its teeming population—a wilderness of roofs. Over the bay a steamer ploughed her way swiftly, black smoke pouring in dense volumes from her funnels; boats plied to and fro, jinrikshas traversed the causeway, and everything betokened life. But up here the weird, wintry stillness of the sullen afternoon was unbroken, save by the fitful rustling of paper tassels hanging from the roof, or the mournful stirring of dead leaves upon the ground. The effect was curious. Leaving the shrine, I climbed further up the hill, and obtained a grand view of the harbour, with the little island at its entry girt by a wreath of silvery surf. On my way back to the yacht I paused to look through the Desema bazaar of *new china*. Although under ordinary circumstances the objects there

would have struck me, perhaps, as handsome and remarkably cheap, we had lived during the past week in such an atmosphere of old art that this new work showed to very poor advantage after it.

CHAPTER V.

THE INLAND SEA.

THANKS to Captain Hotham, Commander the Hon. H. W. Hood, and the many pleasant acquaintances we formed on board her Majesty's ships *Charybdis* and *Pegasus*, our stay at Nagasaki was rendered extremely agreeable. Succeeding as they did a long interval of quiet, the dinners and tiffins with which we were entertained on board their ships, and their return visits to the yacht, constituted a welcome change. We were sorry, therefore, to leave both vessels lying at anchor in the pretty bay, with every prospect of remaining there for the ensuing six weeks. Perhaps the worst feature in travelling is that to the all too rapid flight of time is added the march of our progress.

The meetings are but for a second, and one's passage through the world resembles "ladies' chain" in a quadrille. We touch hands lightly and then pass on, often with regret that the acquaintance should have no longer duration.

The coast scenery we passed on our way to Spec's Straits was bold and mountainous; the straits themselves narrow, winding, and very pretty. The weather was bitterly cold. Large flights of geese and ducks studded the surface of the water and passed overhead incessantly. At daybreak next morning we approached the Straits of Siminisiki, and slowly, against the increasing current, steamed through the mist-obscurd scenery towards the town. Here our Japanese pilot had feared it would be necessary to anchor and wait the turn of the tide. Slowly, however, the yacht crept up the comparatively slack water opposite the town, until every yard of distance possible had been gained; then, shooting out into the current, which at first threatened to swing her head round entirely, full steam was put

on, and inch by inch she forced her way through the narrow entry which compresses the whole volume of the falling tide. As we advanced the view expanded, until at length, having cleared the gloomy and abrupt hills that form the gates, we passed into the Inland Sea. A grand view—grand if only for its expanse—extended before us. Calm it was and peaceful, grey sky and grey sea alike waking and warming to life with the radiance of the early sun. Faint fleecy clouds were melting fast away. Here and there the still surface was just ruffled by wayward breaths of morning air. Dotted about on the water were the slack sails of numberless junks and sampans, vanishing gradually in perspective, until under the shadows of the far-off blue and snowy mountains it became a “tickle point of niceness” to decide whether that tiny white speck sat on the surface and was a sail, or was but the reflection of some glistening peak shining in the placid deeps below.

Our queer little old-fashioned Japanese pilot had established himself on a familiar

footing with us the day he came aboard. Descending to the saloon where we were seated, he saluted us politely, and drawing an armchair up to the fireplace, lit his pipe and spread his hands over the grate to warm. The servants wished to conduct him to the officers' quarters, but he was such a delightfully quaint little old fellow that H—— told them to leave him. Frequently after this he used to drop in with a smile and a bow, draw his chair up to the fire, and smoke a pipe whilst he warmed himself. European captains entertain what I believe is a groundless prejudice against Japanese pilots. H—— had every reason to be most thoroughly satisfied with the man he had engaged. He possessed, moreover, the virtue of temperance, nay, even abstinence—"an excellent thing in pilots."

Narabash had kindly volunteered to accompany the yacht during the remainder of her cruise in Japanese waters, and for a respectable honorarium (which with modest appreciation of his own abilities he did not assess at any too low a figure)

declared himself willing to assist in procuring more curios. The idea was no doubt worthy of immediate attention from his point of view, but H—— did not feel convinced that a “connoisseur’s” assistance was so indispensable as he had thoughtfully represented, nor could he be brought to see that we should be more probably imposed upon without his assistance than with it. With polite regret that gentleman’s further services were therefore declined.

Don Jose, *alias* “Joe,” is himself again. Napoleon was given away at Nagasaki to a French photographer. A sea life did not agree with the dog, and had he been kept on board much longer he would probably have died. Consequently the poodle is once more “monarch of all he surveys,” and has retaken the main hatchway pass to the kitchen. To celebrate his restoration he indulged in a pitched battle with the cat, and reduced her to submission. I know not what indemnity he exacted, but in the way of territory the cat has been forced to cede all her rights on the main and upper decks,

retaining only a small province in the fo'k'sle and the privilege of ratting in the hold of the ship. The only creature now on board that does not acknowledge his supremacy is "Jacko," the monkey. Jacko is so supernaturally quick in his movements that Joe is wounded and the skirmish is over before he can dress his teeth and make him ready for the fray. All that remains for him to do is to sit on deck and growl at the monkey in the rigging. Jacko's great delight is to steal along the hen-coops and seize some unwary fowl through the bars. Then he holds on like grim death, and chatters with demoniacal glee at the cackling and consternation he has created. The funniest scene I ever saw was a sparring match between him and a gigantic Cochin China cock that had got loose. The row they made between them was enough to scare all the fish within a degree of the yacht. Jacko succeeded in securing a few feathers, which he chewed viciously in the intervals; but the cock was a determined warrior, and fought with

such valour that the monkey availed himself of an early opportunity to retreat.

Throughout the day the scenery was interesting, though to a certain degree monotonous, devoid as it was of colour, and lacking that grandeur which alone can in any measure compensate for such a loss. We were fortunate in the weather. A cold and cutting wind sprang up as the day wore on, but the atmosphere was so beautifully clear that we missed nothing of the scenery.

The yacht anchored for the night in Horizén Bay at 9.30 p.m. Almost as soon as day broke I was on the bridge with "Old Johnny," the pilot. Gloomy hills, partially curtained in mist, encircled us. Behind them, in the clearer air above, rose pure white peaks and snowy ranges. The cloudy gates of dawn were slowly parting, and young Day stole shyly forth with a rosy blush and a doubtful glance, as half ashamed or half afraid to face the austere night. For Night is the Sister of Mercy who has taken the veil; Day, alas! only a faithless courtesan. She comes again half doubting to her

work. With every ageing second growing in beauty, she feels her strength and waxes bolder. Darkness is vanquished, her veil is torn aside; the far-off mountains burst upon the view, and "where the mesmerizer snow" has not entirely white-clothed and wrought them in slumber, their red clay, wet with the transient thaw, shines as if in reflection. Myriad tiny rills, trickling down the hillsides, flash like chaplets of threaded jewels. No longer are the snowy ranges ghost-like and wan. On their pure textures a thousand dim soft rainbow hues, delicately pencilled, and melting harmoniously through every nuance of shading one into another, glow and fade, glisten and vanish, as though a transparent web, woven of sunbeams, shadows, rays of light, and faint reflections of the golden-edged clouds, were playfully spread and withdrawn, now here, now there, on their sparkling slopes. Low down clouds of mist, that have clung to the valleys and bathed the lesser hills in white, break into curling shapes and sail away after the vanished

night. And at length whole fleets of sampans and fishing-boats, hidden from us hitherto, are revealed scattered over the sunlit waters, which reproduces with kindred tones, enhanced in depth and beauty, each coloured sail and picturesque hulk. From twilight to broad day, from clouded darkness and grey dawn to a pictured scene of sunshine and fair weather, the transformation was perfect. Had some bright guiding spirit, some celestial stage manager (since "all the world's a stage" such beings should exist), from the summit of one of those far-off pale peaks, watched calmly its completion and with magic wand ordered its mutations, they could not have been more regular or beautiful. "The ripple of the morning wave" curled and broke with crisp music against the yacht's side, the pure breath of the mountain air was borne across her track, and, swiftly moving, we sped on our second day's voyage.

The number of junks, sampans, and fishing-boats in the Inland Sea is remarkable. Every bend and broad and narrow was

crowded with them. Frequently so numerous were the sails collected together, that the scene strongly resembled a small boat sailing regatta.

During all the morning we steamed through one long panorama of lovely scenery, winding our way in and out of the "three thousand islands," which formed a succession of ever-changing beautiful lakes. Vainly we strove to identify the island of Awadsi, according to Japanese legendary lore the home of the god Izanaghi and his spouse Izanami (founders of the Kami or Sinsyn faith), and the cradle of the Japanese race. But as each island seemed more beautiful than the last, and this was supposed to be the most beautiful of all, evening came and we were still undecided. To-day the scenery was altogether finer than yesterday; some of the snow-clad mountain chains, particularly that part of the Nippon range near Marugame, being lofty and very striking. On the whole, the likeness between this and Swiss scenery is very striking. Some truth there may

be in the accusation of barrenness brought sometimes against the Inland Sea country. Certain districts do perhaps suffer from a lack of trees and foliage. To us this was the more noticeable, journeying as we had directly from the prodigal vegetation of Siam. Formerly the country was covered with camphor-wood and other trees, but reckless felling, unaccompanied by any planting, has utterly denuded it in places of its natural covering; and had not Government taken the matter in hand, this abuse was spreading so rapidly that in a short time Japan, like Spain, might have suffered from its climatic effects. One of the most extraordinary features of the country is the remarkable extent to which the hills have been terraced for cultivation. The labour and industry thus expended must have been enormous. Amongst the lesser hills were some carved from summit to base, into small oblong and square patches. The effect is very curious.

.. We were more fortunate even than on

the previous day in the weather. Until a late hour in the afternoon it was beautifully clear and almost warm, an unusual circumstance here at this time of the year (early in February). It seemed, indeed, as if a summer's day had gone astray in the calendar, and fallen by accident amidst its wintry brethren. At nine p.m. we anchored, and on the following day proceeded to Kobe. The islands were cleared, the loch-like scenery was at an end, and again we were in the open—open, at least, for the Inland Sea, for still land could always be discovered, and frequently our course lay close in shore. Constant opportunities were thus afforded of observing the picturesque little villages that nestled by the water's edge, at the head of miniature bays, or on the gardened hillsides, animating the picturesque shores of the Inland Sea with signs of life.

What an Arcadia would this be for artists ! Living is to be had at a mere nominal rate. For a few shillings a week a man may obtain all that he requires. The people are delight-

ful in their simplicity, and eagerness to oblige, and other uncivilized virtues. Apart from the numberless pictures Japanese life and villages afford, subjects of a grander nature may be found for the canvas at every turn, for the scenery is full of point and character and the right size for painting. We unfortunately only saw the sea from the sea, or from its most disadvantageous point of view—the case, it seems to me, with all scenery in which water is a prominent feature. No more perfect sketching tour could be conceived than to wander round the shores of this fairy-like sea. Permission to do so would have to be obtained, but this, I believe, could be easily managed.

CHAPTER VI.

KOBE.

By two o'clock the *Witch* had anchored at Kobe, before the stereotyped quay, promenade, basin, row of respectable white houses, hotel and consular flags to be seen in all parts of the world. Everything looked spic and span new, and seemed "made to match," as if, in their hunger for Western novelties, the Japanese had ordered the whole front of the town of some enterprising Yankee contractor, and "got it out ready made" from the States. Soon a boat from H.M.S. *Sylvia* (a gun-boat employed in surveying the Inland Sea) boarded us, and later on in the afternoon S—— and I went for a run ashore to stretch our legs.

Next morning we started on a general inspection of the curio shops. Curio dealing is here carried on in a far more systematic manner than at Nagasaki. Several *bric-à-brac* shops and warehouses exist, and besides the professional merchants there are a number of amateur dealers, who increase their incomes by exporting Japanese articles for the American and European markets. Foreigners' tastes and discrimination are consequently gauged to a nicety, and the shops abound in cheap rubbish and newly manufactured goods, differing only from those seen at Singapore in their less monstrous prices. At one shop we certainly did see a few specimens of old work that were very fine. The owner acknowledged that he had but little really good gold lacquer on hand, but offered to send to a neighbouring Daimio, who had some he was willing to dispose of. The castles of the Daimios have become almost the sole depositories of these old works of art, no longer now produced in Japan. It is to be regretted that so exquisite an

art should so rapidly have declined. Soon its secrets will be lost and the faculty will have perished, whilst the miserable manufactures and cheap imitations of the day live and flourish.

Not alone in Japan is such deplorable falling away in art and manufactures visible. All the world over the conflict between substance and "shoddy," between art and merchandise, is being fought out. "Shoddy," unfortunately, gains ground and artists become manufacturers. Pace and cheapness are the spirits of the age. We live too fast, with the results that usually characterize any hurried performance. To produce some of these small lacquer trifles has been the work of years. A waste of time, do you say? Is that time wasted which results in anything beautiful? and are those years more barren which produce a few mature works of real value than those which bring forth hundreds of worthless objects that pleasure no man?

Naturally the price of old work was high, though not so in proportion to the labour

it exhausted. Native artists were fostered and rewarded by the Daimios, whose retainers in many cases they were. But the glory of the Daimios has departed; their power and estates have been wrested from them; the pecuniary compensation they received from Government has been squandered or speculated away, and they, so far from patronizing others, are in many instances paupers themselves. The manufacture of old lacquer, or rather of good lacquer, and china is abandoned, simply because it no longer finds purchasers. It pays far better to produce cheap and common articles. Visitors should not attempt to buy until they have had some opportunities of contrasting, with the assistance of a good judge, the two styles, new and old. A comparatively slight knowledge will obviate any flagrant impositions. It is difficult to give rules for discriminating between them, although, once compared, they are not easy afterwards to confuse. The majority of good articles that we saw were in gold lacquer. Of this the new work shines like

French polish, and has the appearance of being covered with ordinary varnish, whereas the old presents a duller and more decidedly metallic lustre. It is almost impossible to make any impression on it with the finger-nail, but the new is comparatively soft. It is frequently possible, if new lacquer is held in a certain light, to detect the grain of the wood beneath it; with old lacquer the back and interior of every article may be carefully scrutinized, without any such discovery being made. New lacquer kept in the damp peels off; old lacquer does not. A good test of the quality of the article is to damp the finger and, dipping it in cigar or tobacco ash, apply it to a part of the gilt design. Good lacquer will stand the rubbing; but with bad lacquer the gilding is also inferior, and a smart application will remove it. The artistic taste and talent displayed in the design, the thickness of the gilding it is worked in, the general workmanship and perfection of finish, will, if taken into consideration, all help to form a shrewd judgment.

In like manner with china, the taste and talent displayed in colouring and design, the colours, whether pure or dirty, even or blotchy, well blended and contrasted, or thrown together anyhow, will greatly assist the purchaser in deciding whether the object belongs to the new or the old style. Too much faith should not be placed in the china marks. They are frequently imitated ; moreover, the bottoms of old china articles that have been broken are often preserved and fitted into new pieces.

Leaving the regular merchants, we plunged into back streets and byways, seeing in the course of our peregrinations through pawnbrokers' establishments, small dealers' shops, and out-of-the-way corners, many rare and valuable curios. There is still much to be seen and bought in the way of curios. The stock is, however, daily diminishing. Every succeeding visitor will have to devote more time to hunting for them, and will find the Japanese of all classes fully alive to their increasing value.

Provisions in Japan, at this time of the

year, are excellent and moderate in price. The beef is good, and there is a profusion of game. In fact, Kobe on this score is the best place we have stopped at.

Unworthy sightseers at the best of times, here we have degenerated into curio hunters. Our intention had been to-day to go up to Kyoto, but the morning broke so thoroughly wet, cheerless, and miserable, that we put it off indefinitely. After breakfast the weather cleared, and we spent the early part of what had turned out a fine sunny afternoon in the dens of pawnbrokers and curio dealers. Subsequently we rode out towards the waterfall, and climbed to the first and second falls. In summer, when flowers, ferns, and foliage are abroad, the whole scene, with the quaint little tea-houses perched on odd ledges overhanging the water, must be very pretty. Now, however, the country is partially under snow, and both the streams are so attenuated and small that they could with ease pass through a three-inch pipe. From a point near the higher fall a grand view of

the Inland Sea can be obtained. Osaka lies on the left, Kobe beneath, and on the far side the Niphon range, white and wintry, sends its broad reflections through the sea, right into the sunny bay below.

Returning, we visited a Sintoo temple, known commonly amongst Europeans here as the temple of the White Horse. My Sintoo readers * must pardon me if I smile when the picture of that noble animal rises before me. I was prepared to find that—

“The angry steed did chide his foaming bit,
As much disdaining to the curb to yield;”

but, poor ragged, unkempt, tame old gray pony, you might have stuck pins into him all over, and he would not have evinced the slightest irritation. He had not a “bit,” and had he possessed a bit he wouldn’t have chidden it, and it wouldn’t have foamed. So far from disdaining to yield, I am sure it was the only thing he was really capable of doing quickly. He

* The Sinsyn faith consists in the worship of ancestors. Probably, therefore, many are Sintoos in this country without being aware of it.

had two vill-eyes, softening of the brain, a cold in his Roman nose, and looked pre-eminently gray and willing to die. We fed him with the orthodox offering of beans purchased at a near stall, and he ate them as if it was a weary duty. On the other side of the gate were two monkeys in equally wretched condition.

The temple consisted of a shrine with a roof over it, such as may be seen sometimes over a well in the country, or over the wicket-gate of a country churchyard. Near it was a raised platform similarly roofed—used, we were told, by the “fighting men,” probably wrestlers.* Around were lesser buildings devoted to various purposes. One of them contained the graven image of a white horse in an advanced stage of megrims. Near the steps of the shrine was

* The wrestlers in Japan form one of the oldest guilds, if the term is applicable, in the world; the foundation being dated 659 A.C., in the reign of Zimmon, first of the Mikados. They are under royal protection. The company is regularly organized and subdivided into small companies that travel about. All are subject to a grand master residing in Kioto.

the usual monolith tank or lavatory. A priest and woman came, whilst we were there, to pray. Devotions were commenced by striking a gong, suspended from the roof, with a bead-worked rope that hung beside it. Then, standing with bowed heads, they muttered prayers rapidly, pausing perpetually to clap their hands. The costume of the priest resembled somewhat that of a Greek priest, but was yellow in colour. As is the case, I believe, with all Sintoo temples, this is overgrown and hidden by fine trees, whose leafy arms, spreading abroad, dim with solemn shades the scene of the Sintoo religious ceremonies. Tomorrow we do not leave as originally intended, but are going to Arrima.

CHAPTER VII.

ARRIMA.

AT half-past ten we started, each in a jinriksha drawn by three men, a wheeler and two leaders—picked teams possessed of wonderful going and staying powers. Off they went at a rapid trot, swinging round corners and dashing down the crowded thoroughfares in a manner which threatened to enliven the commencement of the journey with striking incident. However, they proved very handy, and the foot passengers exhibited fowl-like dexterity in avoiding the wheels, so that we escaped accident.

Dollars were said to be useless up country. Before quitting the town it was necessary, therefore, to procure change. The first money-changer we applied to (an individual

smoking calmly over a hibatchi) said he should have been happy to oblige us, but unfortunately he had no money. Rather a disadvantage in his business. However, a second supplied us with some quires of paper money for a few dollars. Paper money is at a discount in Japan. Lately it has heavily increased. Some enterprising students of our European civilization imported a fellow machine to that used by the Government for manufacturing notes, and continued their operations with such success that they had circulated two million dollars before suspicion alighted on them. The imitations proved to be so accurate that it was found impossible to distinguish between the good and bad notes, consequently the Government was forced into the dilemma of repudiating or acknowledging all alike. They chose the latter course. How far this story may be true in its details, I know not. Without vouching for its veracity, I give it as the currently accepted explanation of the steadily declining value of paper money here. A Mexican dollar is now

(February, 1880) worth, in paper, one dollar thirty-seven and a half cents. The most serious result of this reckless issue of notes has been to deprive the country of its small silver currency. Bankers have bought the greater part of it up with paper, and have exported it to Singapore, Hong Kong, Shanghai, and other ports.

To return to our ride. The roads were very heavy, and most of our men, at the commencement not by any means overburdened with clothing, gradually divested themselves of everything but a narrow strip of calico. Two or three, however, supported the constraint of a shirt, whilst two men of the dozen—worthy disciples of “le respectable régisseur de Mademoiselle de Bellavoine” in a witty French novel—so far deviated from what I take to be the general custom amongst jinriksha men once escaped from the precincts of a treaty port, as to complete the journey in breeches. Many of the men were beautifully tattooed, a practice the Japanese carry to the highest pitch of perfection. More willing workmen

I never saw; they were as cheery and light-hearted as a band of children holiday-making. The slightest approach to a joke was relished by them, and on the least provocation they were ready to go into fits of laughter.

The Japanese are the most delightful people I have ever met with. I allude, of course, to those of them who have not yet been Europeanized, or what, with blunt egotism or keen irony, we are pleased to term civilized. Their manners are perfect—a trait, by the way, which distinguishes the Eastern from Western nations generally. Why should it be so? Is it that the spirit of good manners lies in the commandment, “Do unto others as you would they should do unto you,” and that this being entirely opposed to the whole instinct and education of the trading Western, whose creed is rather to “Do others, or they are sure to do you,” it is impossible for it to enter into his daily life? At any rate, we have a marvellous knack of corrupting the manners of any previously isolated people we come into

contact with, and the difference between the Europeanized Japanese and his still benighted brothers is sufficiently marked already. To my perverted mind the benighted brethren are charming in their simplicity; good nature, gaiety, and honesty. And the women—oh, the women! so winning and gentle, and wonderfully pretty, some of them. Can this be vice which is so modest and unconscious? We are taught to believe it. And yet, would you take your moral yard measure and apply the same standard all the world over? “There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so.” Let us not think, therefore, for the question who is right will still arise. Every one moral code or religion consigns every other to perdition. The only thing we can be certain of is that, if there is a hereafter, we shall all be either lost or saved, and the question of which depends upon circumstances or not, as the case may be. But for the dark-eyed daughters of Japan, if you would see them aright, come quickly; come before we have

perverted their taste in dress with our strained fashions; come before young ladies' seminaries have changed their natural artlessness into mincing affectation and concealed calculation; come whilst a trace of the old Japanese character and manner yet remains to charm you; for civilization, so called, marches apace here, and if you hasten not it will soon be too late.

But where are, or rather were we? Somewhere on the road to Arrima, if I mistake not. Pardon me, reader, it is so easy for one to stray when Japanese girls lead the way. Well, to return—I mean, go on. Our road lay up a mountain pass, up, up, up, until—(Avaunt, ye Japanese maidens! My reader will none of you!)—until we reached the snow. By degrees the heavy fog cleared off, and the rest of the day was bright and sunny. The scenery was charming, rich in contrasted foliage of bronze and gold, scarlet and deep-dyed crimson, dark evergreen and royal purple, amidst all which lay interspersed patches of pure white snow. The feathery bamboo tossed

its lissom plumage next the sturdy oak, and funereal-plumed pine trees in the background seemed darker still by comparison with the star-leaved maple on the slope before them. Through three or four picturesque villages we passed. Their irregularity and the low-thatched roofs of the cottages put one strongly in mind of Bulgarian hamlets. And now our route wound along a highly cultivated valley, where the terraced land was walled up with stone, and built up with turf in a manner which betokened endless labour and industry. Each level was irrigated by a little streamlet of water, and every patch was gardened with scrupulous care and neatness.

When at length we came to a halt in the shady streets of Arrima, it was found that our men had brought us there at the rate of five miles an hour. Considering the fearful condition of the roads and the hilly route, this was an excellent performance.

Following our guide, we walked up to the tea-house, and ate the lunch we had brought with us. Our hostess, a busy,

shaven-headed old dame, bustled about and received us with the greatest *empressement*. Her hand-shaking and attentions were quite overwhelming. If any one moved to look out of window, she followed him with a chair; and, doubtless with the kind intention of interesting us, she later on brought a crowd of grandchildren and babies in to be admired. We said, of course, that they seemed to be the right pattern, were nice and fat for their age, etc., etc., and explained, through our interpreter, how delighted we were to have an opportunity of seeing them; in fact, told all the lies appropriate for the circumstance. But why, oh, why have mothers such mistaken notions of amusement, and such a fearful misconception of the beautiful? Grandmothers are old enough to know better, but they, I think, are even worse. Who but an immediate progenitor can admire the prognathous cheeks, the concave nose with window-like nostrils, the tuberculous bulging forehead, the unmeaning wall-eyes, the furry poll, and the body of a baby

which for all the world is like a crab turned on its back. The creature violates every canon and proportion recognized by artists as appertaining to beauty, and yet—— Yes, I am quite ready. Good-bye, old lady. Effusive hand-shaking, and we depart.

The tea-house garden was a fair sample of hundreds of others you may see in Japan—a doll's garden, a garden in miniature. It seems as if one saw it through a reversed telescope. Dwarf trees were planted in its mazes; tiny paths a foot or less broad meandered in and out its diminutive grottoes. Liliputian bridges spanned trickling rills and cascades, and pigmy summer-houses were erected on the brinks of minute lakes. The effect was odd and very pretty. Why do not some of you make a Japanese garden in a corner of your own? It would only occupy a space of twenty or thirty feet by ten or twelve.

Now that we are clear of those children, it occurs to me to mention that the old lady's shaven head was a sign of widowhood. Married women in Japan also

blacken their teeth and pluck out their eyebrows—a curious custom, which one would fancy must have originated with the husband, perhaps the jealous husband. Owing to foreign example, however, all these old fashions are being abandoned, and though—the foxes that have already lost their tails being in the majority and possessing considerable influence—they are losing ground but slowly, still new customs are, as a rule, so readily adopted by the people that travellers in another generation may find black teeth, plucked eyebrows, and shaven heads scarce, if not almost unique.

Arrima, a Japanese watering-place, delightfully situated in the mountains, is a small village, distant about twelve miles from Kobe. In the summer its sulphur baths attract a large number of visitors; indeed, I am told that the baths are crowded to overflowing, and bathers fill the streams that run by the roadside. This and basket-work—carried by the natives to a most wonderful pitch of per-

fection—are its chief claims to local importance. In the village we filled the jinrikshas with specimens of basket-work so delicate and frail that I am afraid they will be crushed long before England is reached. Then we looked into the bath-houses. Here men and women, unconscious of the slightest immodesty, bathe together *in puris naturalibus*, and in this state remain immersed to their chins in a large tank of hot water. A rather pretty woman and three men occupied the bath when we entered; the party was soon augmented by the arrival of three girls and two men, who, casting off their loose garments, stepped calmly in and bobbed about with the rest, the water clothing them. The bath-keeper was anxious that we also should bathe, but we stopped our ears and fled away. Will you say that these Japanese must be a most immoral people? Truly it is not so. With the exception of a certain class, their women are fairly virtuous. Nowhere is the marriage tie more honestly respected while it lasts. The baths of Arrima are not unique ;

throughout Japan the public baths present the same spectacle. *Honi soit qui mal y pense*. The natives see no harm in it; they are unable to comprehend the feelings of a foreigner who argues the point with them, and such being the case, there is in reality less immodesty in a Japanese bath-house than in a European ball-room with its fair dames *bien décolletées* and well "tied back."

Returning to Kobe, darkness overtook us, so our men made large torches of brushwood and bamboo, which lighted up the scenery splendidly, and created many curious effects as they rattled through dark valleys and shadowy passes. They brought us back, if anything, faster than they had taken us, and with one or two narrow shaves of going off the road and down the steep hillside, we reached Kobe in good time for dinner.

Amongst Japanese marriage laws is one that attracts attention, and haply, too, not a little envy, from the wedded foreigner. A man here may take unto himself a wife on trial (on a short lease as it were),

and not liking her, give her a written character and send her away. So at least I was told; I did not verify the information either experimentally or by research. Unchastity does not bear the same stigma here that an infringement of our stern moral code would involve in virtuous Britain. Formerly it was legal for a father to sell his daughters, and, without any feeling of degradation, they were often (if the parent was poor) disposed of to be educated and retained in brothels. In like manner men, without distinction of rank, frequently selected their wives from these establishments, and excellent wives they were said to become. So far from being degraded in the eyes of the people, courtesans of reputation, or rather of renown, were wont, on certain occasions, to take part in the religious processions and ceremonies. Now, although the buying and selling of girls is prohibited, a daughter, if her parents are in difficulties, will voluntarily surrender herself to the keeper of a night-house for a sum of money. On the other hand, it

may be said that intrigue is rare, and the streets of Japanese towns are guiltless of the reproaches which may be levelled against the capitals of Europe, and particularly of England.

The foreign concession at Kobe is about half a mile square. Within this small space are gathered together a great variety of nationalities. It possesses a Chamber of Commerce, a local board, two clubs, three or four places of worship, and is inhabited by missionaries of sundry sects and a galaxy of haughty consuls. Little wonder, therefore, that with these elements of discord the results are cheerful. A characteristic tale is told about the difficulty that arose in naming the streets. The British were determined to christen everything *à la* Wellington Street, the French *à la* Rue Napoléon; the Americans voted for Avenues, the Germans would hear of nothing but Kaiser Strasse and Vaterland Platz, whilst a few Italians plaintively murmured for, at any rate, one Strada di Napoli or Via Firenze. Each community sought to

impose its own patriotic nomenclature, and the dispute was finally settled by simply numbering the houses.

On the morning following our excursion to Arrima, the lacquer and curios from the Daimios arrived on board. It was a superb collection, containing specimens of rare beauty. At mid-day the yacht got under way and started for Yokohama.

CHAPTER VIII.

YOKOHAMA AND TOKIO.

THE tourist route in Japan has been so lately and so excellently described by Lady Brassey in her charming book, "The Voyage of the *Sunbeam*," that very little remains to be said on the subject; the more especially as the authoress, whose energy seems to have been boundless, saw not only every place that we visited, but very many others besides. "The Voyage of the *Sunbeam*" is a book without which no yacht should visit these waters. Apart from consideration of the numberless idle hours it spirits away in pleasant reading, a vast amount of useful information is contained therein, and it is frequently of service as a book of reference. "How long did it

take the *Sunbeam* to go from — to — ?” “What does Mrs. Brassey say about so and so?” “What did they see at — ?” are questions we daily asked and found answered. It is the “best-thumbed” book in the ship. Here, as at Kobe, we were on Lady Brassey’s ground, and must confess our inferiority (men always must by comparison with the opposite sex) as sight-seers. If the reader cares to know what we saw, let him search the *Sunbeam’s* chronicles, and he will find it there, with much besides, told in a style that is always easy, always pleasant, and never wearisome.

At Yokohama we drop again into a European quarter, attached to a semi-Europeanized Japanese town, with its curio shops and curio streets, containing a vast array of trash, intermingled with a few, very few, things worthy of notice, and hardly anything that might not be bought in London or Paris. There is a fine esplanade and one or two good hotels. The most interesting place of all to visit that we und, was “Andersen’s Photographic

Studio," where a really fine collection of views of the interior of Japan may be seen. Judging from these, the country must be lovely; but I am more than ever convinced that summer is the time to see it to advantage. Yokohama and its immediate neighbourhood are not remarkable for fine scenery, with the exception, perhaps, of Mississippi Bay. The "plains of Heaven," within easy reach, are, however, well worth a visit. Facetious residents strongly recommend you to profit by the excellent opportunity thus afforded you of going there.

Tokio, the ancient Yeddo, is about an hour's journey by train from Yokohama. The engines are chiefly driven by Japanese engineers; indeed, only two Englishmen are still thus employed. Throughout all branches of public works, the same system is being observed; and wherever the native Japanese feel themselves strong enough, their foreign masters are being gradually superseded.

Travelling with us was an English sportsman, with dog and gun, bound on a few

days' shooting. The pheasant shooting in Japan was formerly very fine, and at some distance from the treaty ports is doubtless so still. Within their immediate vicinity the country has, however, been much shot over, and ninety brace of birds killed by three guns in six days was quoted as the best bag of the season. In Yesso I am told that bears and other large game abound. European dogs, when imported, invariably get "worm in the heart," and die. Dissection in some cases has revealed the heart in a frightful condition, little better, in fact, than a bunch of worms.

Passing three forts that command the approach by water to Tokio, or would be able to do so were they armed, the train drifted into the station of the capital, and a few minutes later, with tandem jinrikshas, we were trundling through the streets to the Seijoke Hotel. Here the accommodation was tolerable—far better than we had been led to anticipate. A Swiss cook, manager, boots or something, is attached to the place, which is managed in European style. The rooms were clean and the people obliging.

That fine, drizzling rain which wets you through quicker than any other sort of rain, and looks far more hopeless and dreary, had been placidly falling since daybreak. It was descending still, and it continued without intermission for the next twelve hours. Consequently Tokio was a sea of mud, and the clog-walking inhabitants, vainly trying to shelter themselves beneath paper umbrellas, looked as abjectly miserable as drenched fowls. The paper houses must have had a great time of it. In rain, I should fancy, an ordinary sieve would afford as much protection as a Japanese house. It is extraordinary that in a country where for a fair third of the year they are subject to inclement and often severe weather, the people should be content to dwell in such frail habitations. The frequency of earthquakes may have influenced them originally in choosing this style of architecture; but of late years the shocks have not been severe, and the extra loss which, had they been more substantial houses, an earthquake would entail on them, both in life and

property, would be far more than saved in the decrease of the losses by fire they, under existing circumstances, annually experience. It was formerly estimated that Tokio was completely burnt and rebuilt in the course of every five years.

From the hotel we went to the legation, where, in the absence of Sir Harry Parkes, Mr. Kennedy was acting as *chargé d'affaires*. The legation is near the old palace of the Tycoons, who, until deposed in 1868, made Tokio their place of residence. It lies in the centre of the city, surrounded by triple moats and fortifications that enclose a large area of ground. The fortifications are now dismantled, and the ground within them partially built over and devoted to the purposes of drill grounds, etc. Within the second line, and near an entry to the gardens of the Mikado, is the British legation. From the legation we went for a tour round part of the town, pausing at several points of interest, amongst others Uyenô, where a decisive victory was gained by the Mikado over the Tycoon's troops in 1869.

Owing, perhaps, to the miserable weather, Tokio did not present a lively aspect. It is a large, straggling town, composed of wooden and paper houses. For these, in one quarter, where the last great fire took place, less picturesque though more substantial "go-downs" have been substituted. Under more favourable circumstances, the busy scene, the crowded population, and the interminable rows of shops must be rather striking. A plentiful sprinkling of the queer little toy soldiers in those useless and absurd French gaiters, and here and there a pony-mounted little officer whose legs look more like loose-hanging ornamental appendages than part of the man, may be seen parading the streets with a conceited air which would almost do credit to a Prussian officer.

The only place we stayed at for any length of time was the temple of Asakusa. Leading up to it is a street of toy shops and gambling booths, where, cards and dice being prohibited, the natives play a kind of bagatelle without cues. This is terminated

by an enormous gate hall painted red. On either side of it are two colossal figures, *à la* Gog and Magog. The one is supposed to welcome back lost sheep; the other, those who have not strayed. Before one of the figures hung scores of straw-plaited sandals, the propitiatory offerings of the sore-footed. In the vicinity of this gate the ground is so covered with tame pigeons that it is difficult to avoid stepping on them. The sacred birds did not look happy. Rain had, I imagine, damped the ardour of their charitable devotees, and offerings and religious business generally seemed slack.

Asakusa, a heavy wooden structure, may formerly have been handsome. Its gigantic beams and massive construction have still something imposing about them. But its gilded glories have long since departed, and it stands out now an uncompromising nightmare of red paint. Within, it is dilapidated; the carving and decorations have lost their richness, the frescoes are decaying. Near the entrance a large barred money box invites voluntary contributions. A curious

image stands on one side of the shrine ; it is supposed to possess the virtue of healing the sick. By constant rubbing, its features have been so nearly obliterated that it seems sadly to need a healing touch itself. The temple occupies the centre of a large fair. A motley collection of booths, a theatre, waxwork show, tea shops, shooting galleries, bagatelle dens, etc., are crowded round it ; but to-day, for some reason, everything was closed.

Leaving the temple, we returned to the hotel. After dinner we paid a visit to the theatre, La Scala, the Covent Garden of Tokio. Lately it has been redecorated at a cost of thirty thousand dollars. Hundreds of jinrikshas, with their coloured lanterns, were waiting outside. In the entrance were two immense heaps of straw sandals and umbrellas. I was speculating on the glorious row there would be when each person sought his own, when the people began to come out and quietly appropriated the first that came. We had arrived half an hour too late ; the piece, which had been running all day, was

over. The interior of the house was of plain wood, with red cloth hangings. With a few texts and brass fittings, it would have made an excellent temple for some sect of modern Pharisees.

The most favourable point of view from which to mark Japan's advance in modernization is the bazaar. This serves as a sort of civilizometer. It is somewhat on the principle of an exhibition, and consists of a straggling succession of buildings, containing examples of every branch of modern industry practised in Japan. Specimens of old work are not admissible. Everything must be of the newest. Thus, you may see here exactly to what pitch Japan has reached in her manufactures. Looking at it in this manner, it is extremely interesting and well worth a long and careful examination. The purchasing of ironclads, the formation of an army, public works, and foreign treaties are no real signs of movement in unison with the times. They may, after all, be mere hollow imitations, or at most a distant straggling in the wake of what is called

progress. A rapid survey of this bazaar reveals at once that more than this is here the case, and warrants the conclusion that forced, artificial civilization, so often proved a commercial failure, is in this instance likely to take root and flourish. It is not limited, as usually occurs, to a simple grafting of French polish and English vices on to native indolence in the higher classes, but the blessing of civilization has reached the people. They have learnt that shoddy pays better than good stuff, and that quantity is more remunerative than quality.

“But these are the days of advance, the works of the men of mind,

When who but a fool would have faith in a tradesman's ware or his word !”

The lesson appointed for the day is that honesty and truth are foolish old prejudices which must be abandoned if you would prosper and grow rich. They are picking up these crumbs of knowledge with surprising aptitude. Their initiation is, of course, still incomplete. They may still possess scruples from which to free themselves. But

such, in all matters, is their capacity for receiving instruction that they may hopefully look forward to an approximate millennium of wooden nutmegs, pine-tree hams, strikes, bank swindles, wife kickings, divorce reports, railway accidents, sanctimonious hypocrisy within doors, and vice on the pavement. Religious scruples will not impede their progress, for amongst the upper classes religion is laughed at as a tale of the nursery, a superstition of the poor. The very fact of their prolonged isolation, which at first sight would seem to render them unfitted for receiving new customs, has rather favoured the movement, inasmuch as it has thrown them back upon themselves, driven them to endless repetition, and consequently developed in them the strong tendency they possess to imitate. This faculty of imitation is one of their most marked characteristics ; and when, as is in this case proved by their works, it has descended from father to son through long generations, self-reliance, originality, and the power of judgment and criticism must

have suffered. It required, therefore, only to break through their reserve and arrest their attention with new ideas and fresh customs for them to be adopted *en masse*. Whether the Japanese are happier or comparatively better off now than they were under the old *régime* is very much to be doubted. "Shoddy" and the missionary will promptly answer, "Yea, verily;" but if you ask yonder jinriksha man, who was formerly a noble, he may tell a different tale. Nor have the poorer classes any cause to be grateful for the change; rice and similar commodities, for which there was formerly no export, daily advance in price, whilst the demand for labour has not as yet kept pace with the increased expense of living, and they look back with longing regret to the prosperous days that are gone. However, the blessing of civilization is now in their grasp; they can hear "the word;" and no doubt by-and-by they will manufacture enough "shoddy" to enable them to go to the devil in luxury.

Although we spent some hours in the

bazaar we were unable to see half of it. The place is divided into several departments, all of which are connected. Everything is sold at a fixed price. I could not help thinking that were it not for this drawback, which does away at one fell swoop with all the charm of a bargain, what an ideal paradise this endless labyrinth and maze of stalls would be for good old women.

The temple of Shiba in Tokio is reputed to be the handsomest edifice of the kind in Japan, exceeding in splendour even its twin-temple Uyeno in the same city. Formerly the Tycoons were entombed alternately at Shiba and Uyeno, and on these, their last resting-places, the love of imperial magnificence they ever exhibited has culminated in a final effort to write their memories in gorgeous capitals on the page of time. Under the shadow of the grand old trees that cast a leafy veil betwixt Shiba and the busy turmoil of the city, lies the last Tycoon who died in power. Little enough he recked of the sweeping changes wrought in the country he would have closed

to the "red-haired barbarians" of outer darkness; though, if aught could rouse the dead, surely such marvellous revolutions were enough to wake the old despot from the quiet grave.

We enter, from the lane, a large courtyard. Ranged with grim regularity round its inner edge are rows of stone urns or lanterns about eight feet high, bearing inscriptions which signify that they are presented with all reverence to the defunct ruler by his lesser vassals of the fifth rank. Beyond this, through an open gateway, a glimpse is caught of a similar courtyard, similarly decorated. Undisturbed quiet and solemnity reigns here. No one is passing. Giant trees shut us in from the world. A glint of cold sunshine comes to us from the wintry sky aloft, and all that is seen of life are swift solitary birds that wing their flight across the cloudy wastes. To the left is the Dragon Gate, with horrific dragons intertwined and clinging round the supports of its elaborate roof; and this alone, if there was nothing more beyond it,

would lavishly reward a visit. In truth, it is wonderfully handsome, rich in gilt and carving of grouped flowers and quaint forms. Through the bronze open gates lies a second courtyard, miniature by comparison with the first. Here stand arrayed the bronze lanterns presented by the higher Daimios. It contains also a stone tank or lavatory, wherein true believers dip their hands before devoting themselves to prayer, and a small building in which the stage properties and paraphernalia used on high days and festivals are deposited. Passing another gate, the shadowy hall of the temple is entered. Its walls are decorated with large panels, skilfully carved in intricate masses of birds, flowers, and foliage from single blocks of wood. Here are also a number of lacquer boxes enclosed in silken girdles—"reliquaries," says our useful little guide book, "in which the posthumous titles of the deceased are treasured ;" though who the "deceased" are does not appear certain. Hardly the Tycoons, I should fancy, the boxes are too numerous. This hall is

separated from the chancel by an iron railing, but a dim vista in subdued light, dusky shadows intermingling with the wan illuminations of small paper windows, leads the view solemnly towards the distant shrine, where the dull lustre of gold and gleam of lacquer faintly flashing wherever a feeble ray penetrates its recesses, stimulates the imagination with indefinite and mysterious splendour. It is an architectural reverie, an embodied dream. The temple sleeps in a magic impenetrable silence, and yet the silence seems to live and make mute melody, which, though it be inaudible, still wields harmonious influence.

“Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard are sweeter still.”

More perfect resting-place for man's last home was never wrought. The spell of the mighty dead seems to haunt each moody nook and hover overhead. Its influence inspires us. The mocking spirit and the ready scoff are checked awhile, and something like long unfamiliar reverence steals over us.

New Japan, in its feverish industry, will create nothing to equal the slumberous beauty of these old aisles and cloisters, conceived and realized in the long idle days of her past life. Years hence, when the won race for gold has brought her power and empty honours, she will look back upon them, puzzled and wondering how it was that, alone and all unaided by the Western arts and learning she reverences so much, she yet had skill to work out such a glorious effort of imagination and design. She will wonder over the temple of Shiba, even as she wonders now over the Daibutz, when the power is equally lost that created it and the arts no longer hers by which it was embellished.

Quitting the hall, we passed round to a side door, and, under conduct of a priest, were introduced barefooted into the interior of the shrine. Afterwards, under the same guidance, we visited the bronze urns which enclose the last earthly remains of the Tycoons.

In the evening we returned to Yokohama

and the yacht. Next morning we were glad to find that the *Pegasus*, owing to an unexpected order, had left Nagasaki soon after ourselves, and, having arrived in the night, was now anchored close to the *Witchi*. A renewal of our pleasant acquaintance with Commander the Hon. H. Hood and his officers helped materially to lighten the remainder of our stay in harbour.

Yokohama is by no means a lively port. The European community is of a purely business-like character. Here, as at other treaty ports, there is a foreign concession, or part of the town set aside for foreigners. Many of them, however, live out of town, on the pleasanter and healthier "Bluff," where several pretty villas are situated. Some of the best of these are occupied by missionaries—chiefly American—who appear to have what their countrymen call a "way-up" time of it.

Soon after our return to Tokio we received a very kind letter from Mr. Kennedy, inviting us all to spend a few days with him; but the

weather was so bad that it was no pleasure to go anywhere, and we were anxious to be off to San Francisco and the sport in North America. The day before we left he came down and paid us a flying visit. Fortunately on this day the weather cleared, and when we turned out in the morning Fusi-yama, a giant snow-clad cone, was as clearly visible as if, instead of being forty-five miles distant, the genii of the story-books had raised it with their arts in the night. We had been here for days, little dreaming what a beautiful picture lay hidden from us behind the watery clouds. Now Fusi-yama, crowned with a crown of last year's snow, reared her "pale imperial brow" high up against the pure blue sky, with the calm majestic grandeur of a matchless mountain queen. Homage to thee, Fusi-yama! Few amongst the snow-crowned queens of the earth can compare with thy lone, silent majesty. Throughout the voyage the world has shown us nought to approach thee.

He would indeed be bold who ventured to

predict the future of Japan. Transplanted civilization, such as the Japanese are now cultivating—civilization which owes not its origin to the natural impulses of the people and the march of ideas, but solely to foreign influence and example—is a dangerous experiment for any nation to make, and what form it will ultimately assume in Japan, to what pitch it will attain, or what changes it will entail upon the national character, can as yet only be subjects of the vaguest speculation.

CHAPTER IX.

THE NORTH PACIFIC—YOKOHAMA TO SAN
FRANCISCO.

THE anchor is weighed and we move slowly off under steam; passing the British, French, and Russian men-of-war, we exchange salutes; the yacht heads away from Japan, and another long sea voyage is before us. It is just such a day as happily befell us amongst the islands in the Inland Sea, and until late in the afternoon, as we glide over the placid waters, we loiter about on deck, smoking, chatting, and gazing at beautiful Fuziyama—a solitary cone of driven white against the pale blue sky. At a careless guess one would say it was only a dozen miles off, but reference to the

charts proves the distance to be at least five or six times as great. So our half-formed acquaintance with Japan is at an end, and we "fare forth over the foam-flecked seas" again, in search of other lands.

Once clear of the coast, our course lay northwards until the following afternoon; then, reaching out to sea, the yacht fairly started on her voyage to San Francisco. In the next three days she ran 850 knots in a heavy sea, behaving, as she always does, admirably; after that there was a dead calm for ten hours, and thenceforward heavy, broken weather and variable winds prevailed until we entered port. Nevertheless the *Witch* made good runs, frequently averaging ten knots an hour *close hauled*, once for eighteen hours at a stretch. With more favourable winds she often exceeded fourteen knots, and once fifteen knots an hour. Although in such a sequence of foul weather as was experienced, there would have been every excuse for it, she very rarely had green water on her decks, and only on two occasions shipped seas. One of these split the

heavy top rail of the bulwarks for several feet; the other shattered the lifeboat, which was made fast on deck, and, sweeping aft, broke loose the hen-coops, carried off sundry trifles, and, shivering the ground-glass window of the companion hatchway, poured a deluge of water into the after cabins. It was about three o'clock a.m.; we had all turned in, and were just comfortably asleep, when, with a tremendous crash and rattle, down came the water and effectually roused us. Turning out, I found Tip and a tribe of servants wading about. We got the hatchway open, and presently the bo'sun arrived to say that she had shipped a big sea by the main rigging, which had swept her fore and aft, and smashed the lifeboat; but "it was all right."

"Perhaps it was," I thought, as I hung my feet over the side of my berth and dried them with a towel. "But it was a deucedly unpleasant way of being woke up, all the same."

H—— didn't turn out, so he was dry; nor had he any sympathy for the carpenter,

when he came to lodge a formal complaint against the sea for cutting his lifeboat in two. On the contrary, he was rather pleased, I fancy, for he had set his mind upon building a couple of whaleboats at San Francisco, and he now had some excuse for doing so.

There was little to mark our passage across. We used to rise late and turn in late, breakfast at about twelve, and dine at seven or half-past. As a friend H—— had met in Yokohama travelled with us to San Francisco, we were enabled to play whist, and the evenings were usually thus occupied, unless the weather was too rough, in which case we collected in a corner of the saloon to leeward, and yarned and recounted our experiences over a brew of punch cunningly concocted by the scientific Tip. On one of these occasions I was asked for an account of Baker Pacha's fight at Tash-Kessan. It was my good fortune to be amongst the very few Englishmen who witnessed this engagement, and as, owing to the rapid march of succeeding events, it did

not attract the notice it deserved, I may perhaps be pardoned for introducing an account of it on this occasion.

It was blowing a fine fresh gale outside ; in the saloon the armchairs, stools, etc., had by degrees silted into one corner and become wedged compactly together. Forced to abandon whist, we had taken refuge in this corner, and were discussing the Turco-Russian war.

“Tell us about that fight of Baker’s, when he covered the retreat.”

“Yes, fire away. Wait just a minute, though, till I mix the grog,” chimed in Tip.

It was a long-standing promise ; so when the grog was mixed and pipes were loaded, I commenced.

“It was Christmas time in the Balkans——”

“Good beginning,” said Tip. “And two travellers were riding along the lonely road that led to——”

“Shut up, Tip.”

“Faith, I was only helping him.”

“Well, you see, Shakir Pacha’s division

was holding the Kamarli heights, where there had been a good deal of fighting. After Plevna was taken, the Russian attacks almost ceased. They contented themselves with shelling our lines, and meanwhile sought a fresh route through the hills, in order to turn the position and surround us. Shakir Pacha, who, like the majority of Turkish Generals, was an incapable idiot, refused, until too late, all Baker Pacha's entreaties to be allowed to make a reconnaissance and learn what the enemy were about. When, eventually, he did accede to this request, and a reconnaissance was made, the Russians were discovered on our right rear, threatening our communications with Sophia. They might still have been kept in check for a time, had the pass they were using been promptly seized and held. Shakir, however, objected to adopt this course, and simply remained inactive upon the heights, with his forces melting away from exposure and disease, whilst the Russians were permitted to complete their turning movement unchallenged. The result was that they

interposed thirty thousand men between his division and Sophia, whence its supplies were derived, and one afternoon the Cossacks appeared in Tash-Kessan, a village on the Sophia-Kamarli road, about five miles in rear of the latter place. Shakir awoke then to a sense of the gravity of his position. The same night he despatched Baker, with four guns and four battalions, to retake and hold the village.

“I lived at the time in a little Bulgarian hamlet, named Strigli, situated just under the heights. My next-door neighbour was Burnaby—“Fred” Burnaby. I used to mess with him every evening; and charming little dinners they were too, for he was a delightful host, and his servant (poor Radford, who died afterwards) was an excellent cook. Well, on the evening in question, Radford came to announce dinner somewhat before the accustomed hour, and I found Burnaby already at the form which used to serve as a mess table.

“‘I expect we shall have a fight to-night,’ he said.

“ ‘On the heights, or at Tash-Kessan ?’

“ ‘At Tash-Kessan. The Cossacks occupied the village this afternoon, and Baker is going to drive them out. You had better come over ; we’ll go together.—Did you feed the horses this afternoon, Radford ?’

“ ‘I told Hosman to, sir.’ (Osman was an orderly attached to Burnaby.)

“ ‘And how did you explain it to him ? What Turkish words did you use ?’

“ ‘Oh, I jest told him, sir. He understood me, Hosman did.’

“ ‘Yes ; how did you tell him, though ?’

“ ‘But Radford objected to be brought to the point in this manner. It was his particular weakness to think and lead others to believe that he spoke Turkish like a native. At length, however, driven into a corner, he was forced to acknowledge, ‘Well, sir, I jest hung the nose-bags on him and pintoed.’

“ ‘Soon after nine we started, Osman leading the way. It was bitterly cold, and a driving wind bore with it clouds of frozen

snow. There had been a slight thaw during the day, succeeded by a sharp frost ; consequently the sheep-tracks and road were like glass. Half-way between Kamarli and Tash-Kessan, we overtook the second battalion, winding slowly and silently across the line of hills that intervened between the two places. In their long grey cloaks and hoods the sandal-shod soldiers moved like shadows in the mist. Further on, the guns were with difficulty making the ascent. Below us, to the left, was the gloom of a deep ravine. Here and there glittered a bayonet in the uncertain moonlight. There was a confusion of struggling and falling horses and men straining at the guns. Muttered exclamations of 'Allah il Allah' were heard on all sides. Altogether it was a strange scene.

"To make a long story short, when the troops reached Tash-Kessan, they found that the enemy had vanished. It was accordingly reoccupied without fighting.

"The following day, Baker Pacha took up positions on a horseshoe of hills behind

the village, whence for three days we watched the enemy's troops manœuvring betwixt us and Sophia. On the morning of the fourth day they attacked.

"I had returned to Strigli overnight, to prepare my effects for a rapid move, and was aroused in the early morning by heavy firing on the heights above. At the same time the dull thunder of cannon, reiterated with alarming frequency in the opposite direction, warned me that an engagement had commenced at Tash-Kessan. I decided for the latter place at once, concluding that the demonstration above was only a feint; the enemy's real object being to carry Tash-Kessan and the positions occupied by Baker. If this was effected Shakir's whole army would be surrounded and cut off from all possibility of retreat. The two generals were thus placed back to back, confronting in each case superior forces. Baker Pacha's little division, notwithstanding the reinforcements he had received, consisted only of 2400 men, five field-pieces, and two mountain guns, whilst

immediately opposed to him were forty-five battalions of the Russian Guards, eight batteries of Artillery, and three thousand cavalry.

“With provisions for the day, a pot of Liebig, and a couple of days’ feed for my horse, I started at once. On the road I met the cook of the Red Crescent Ambulance Society retreating in great tribulation.

“‘Monsieur, do not go zer,’ he cried. ‘Ze Russians have take Tash-Kessan; they have take everyting; they have capture my stove.’

“This was certainly a terrible calamity, but there was no time to condole with him. As I approached the scene of action, wounded soldiers came tottering slowly along by themselves. Here and there by the roadside might be seen a huddled heap in a grey cloak, motionless and still; nor were the ruddy stains that dyed the snow in which it lay required to tell its sorrowful tale.

“There is something wonderfully impressive in drawing near a battle that is begin-

ning, but the scene of which is hidden still. The moody, sullen boom of cannon becomes momentarily more frequent and distinct; the fitful rattle of musketry grows more sustained; there is a lull—throbbing silence for a moment, broken by a fiercer gust, a faint far bugle-call, a wavering cheer—‘Allah il Allah! Allah il Allah!’ Behind the hills the struggle rages. Which way does it go? Are we winning? Is it victory or defeat, glory or dishonour? Each minute seems an hour as you hasten forward, for you can see nothing, and thence the fascination and excitement of those few blind moments, which are by far the most exciting of the day. I pushed on as rapidly as possible, meeting at a short distance from Tash-Kessan our handful of cavalry retiring out of fire.

“‘Where was the Ingiliz Pacha?’

“‘On the hills behind the village.’

“Turning to the right and passing three of our guns, which were being briskly worked, I ascended the position, where the General was surrounded by Shakir Bey,

Colonel Allix, A.D.C., Captain Burnaby, Captain Thackeray, and Drs. Gill and Heath.

“Fighting had, it appeared, commenced at daybreak, when the outposts were driven in. The enemy then pushed forward a battery of field artillery, and made some remarkably good practice at the General and his party as they ascended the hill. Meanwhile infantry advanced in columns on both sides of the Sophia road, and also from Tchokantia, a village on our left front. When I arrived the shell fire was rapid, as the enemy had eight batteries engaged.

“Baker Pacha, as usual, was very busy with his telescope. ‘I think we shall manage to hold out; our position is strong,’ he said in his habitual suave undertone, in answer to some remark of Burnaby’s. ‘Allix, will you take the cavalry down on to the plain again? Spread the men out; give the movement as much importance as possible. It will make our line look stronger—fill up a gap as it were.’

“The idea of attacking Tash-Kessan point-blank was speedily relinquished by the Russians, when they found how well prepared the Turks were to receive them. They still, however, continued to shell the positions we occupied, and having by this time acquired the range to perfection, did so with a degree of accuracy beyond all praise. The troops that had been seen advancing by the Sophia road turned off and joined the Tchokantia columns, with the evident intention of outflanking our left wing. For this the General was prepared. Two days previously, he had disposed a battalion in this direction, and only the evening before, on the Russians occupying Tchokantia, had reinforced it with a second. The rifle-firing, hitherto confined to skirmishers, now became more general, as the Russians pressed up the hill to the left, and, slowly and in excellent order, the Turks at the same time retired, for the advanced ground they then occupied had only been taken up in order to check and delay the enemy's attack; it had

never been Baker Pacha's intention to hold it. Our men, therefore, fell back on positions already chosen for them—positions, moreover, of far greater strength, and so situated as to contract the line of defence, which in the first instance was too extended for the troops at disposal.

“Fed by constant reinforcements, the Russian attack continued with apparent success. Cheer after cheer from their men swept over the mountains, and with cheer after cheer the gallant line of red-fezzed Osmanlis defiantly replied. Still, they were heavily overmatched in numbers, and the General now sent his “good battalion,” the heroic Uskups, to the front. With an angry yell, the brave fellows doubled down the hillside and, crossing the road, dashed up the slope before them. In a few minutes they were deployed along the ridge and hotly engaged with the hated “Muscovs.” Then, inch by inch, before Turkish *élan* Russian obstinacy had to give back. In expectation of severe fighting the General had for some time

past been nursing the Uskups, as well as one or two other good battalions. The former now numbered five hundred, but of these only half were left to answer the roll-call in the evening.

“There are no soldiers in the world to compare with Turks. They possess the dash and enthusiasm of French troops, combined with the traditional stubbornness of British regiments. If led by good officers, their *morale* is indestructible. To crown all, they are as hardy as mules. I allude, of course, to full-aged and drilled troops; raw recruits are the same all the world over.

“In the face of such tremendous odds it was not to be expected that our men would push their success very far, but, though they soon ceased to advance, they still held their ground with the most astounding tenacity. Meanwhile the enemy strove to create a diversion on our right. A column of Russian soldiers had outflanked our right wing and were marching to attack us in rear. The General immediately ordered the fire of two fieldpieces and two mountain

guns, placed on our ~~extreme~~ right, to be turned upon them. It had been a work of much labour, involving the construction of a road, to bring up these guns, but the advantage of their position was now obvious; for such was the destruction caused by the fire of grape they poured into the close ranks of the enemy, that the attack was utterly crushed. Throughout this period the Russian batteries continued to shell us without any intermission, and the infernal shrieking and explosions of shells became alike familiar and wearisome. Fighting proceeded also with unabated vigour on the left. The behaviour of the Turkish troops was magnificent. The thin line of "true believers" still presented an unflinching and impassable barrier to the swarms of grey-coated *Giaours* before them. Fresh masses of Russian troops were now discovered extending along the hills, bent upon turning the left of the gallant handful whose ranks they were unable to break. From his sadly diminished reserves Baker at once hurried another battalion to the rescue. At

the same time, Captain Thackeray led the hard-worked little body of cavalry down into the village again, to attack a superior force of Cossacks. This they pluckily and successfully did.

“Most of the fighting, and indeed most of the Turkish troops, were now concentrated on the left. In order, therefore, effectually to follow what was taking place, the General changed his position. From our new standpoint we could see Shakir’s army evacuating the heights and retreating across the plain below. Trains of pack animals, arabas, and artillery, half buried in the snow, were labouring slowly along, and battalion after battalion came in sight, and passed away on the white waste like ships at sea, not one turning aside to render Baker the assistance he so sorely stood in need of. ‘Maintain your ground at all costs; fight to the death,’ was the only reply Shakir Pacha returned to his urgent requests for reinforcements. Considering the vital importance it was that these positions should be

held, such utter disregard appeared little short of insanity. Even the weather was adverse. There was not the slightest chance of a fog until evening. From the ground now gained by the Russian right, they also had doubtless observed the retreat, for they redoubled their efforts, and were again reinforced.

“ At this critical state of affairs Baker Pacha received a message from the engaged troops, which must have severely tried his nerves, strong as they may be. ‘The men say that they can hold the positions for ever, but they are running short of cartridges.’ Through the imbecility of a Turkish officer, the extra cases of ammunition had miscarried. Anticipating a great expenditure, the General had fortunately already sent to Kamarli for fresh supplies. These, however, he had not expected to require until later in the day, and, though on the road, they were still some distance from us. Far off on the plain, we could descry the dotted mule-train slowly advancing. An orderly was despatched in

hot haste to hurry them up, and the result of the day seemed likely to depend upon a mule-race against time. The fate of Shakir's army was in the balance, no less than that of the troops immediately engaged. We watched the progress of the fight, and calculated that of the mules. Time was the 'favourite.'

"An event occurred at this juncture which threatened the most dangerous consequences. The artillery officer who had charge of the three guns placed earlier in the day near the road on our left, but latterly assigned a different station, thought fit to retire without orders. It was of the utmost importance that the guns should hold their ground, as they covered and seriously checked the Russian advance. Baker Pacha, seeing what was taking place, galloped off immediately, and himself brought the guns back to their original position; then, as the artillery officer was at that moment shot dead, he remained with them for over an hour, exposed to a heavy and

continuous fusillade, in order to give the men the moral support of his presence.

“For a while, in the interest of this movement, we forgot the ammunition question. The foremost mules had, however, by this time arrived, and but a few minutes more elapsed before, with renewed vigour, firing increased along our whole line.

“Astonished at the undaunted defence of the Turks, and maddened to see their enemy escaping them when almost within grasp, the Russians moved up fresh supports, and gathered themselves together for a final effort. Reluctantly the General sent another battalion to the front, and we watched the result with anxiety.

“With the exception of one battalion of raw recruits, our whole force was now engaged. Once more, with thrilling effect, the mountains re-echoed to the spirit-stirring ‘Allah il Allah! Allah il Allah!’ Once more, reanimated by fresh assistance and their own undying enthusiasm, the Turks charged with courageous fury, and a chorus of uncontrollable admiration burst

from us as the red fezzes swept down in a long line upon the foe, and forced them, at the point of the bayonet, to retreat some distance down the long-contested slope.

“‘We win,’ said Baker, quietly. His face had never betrayed a trace of emotion all day, but now he smiled a little contentedly.

“The fate of the day was decided at length, and victory lay with the Turks, after one of the most glorious exhibitions of brilliant valour and dogged determination that military history can boast.

“Afternoon was wearing fast away ; in several directions the first faint indications of mist rising from the valleys heralded the night’s fog. Never was such intervention more gratefully welcomed, never more thoroughly merited. The men had been fighting from sunrise to sunset. Night comes on apace in the Balkans, and darkness speedily set in. By degrees the flash of rifles grew less frequent, though more vivid in the dusky twilight ; their hitherto sustained rattle became broken and fitful,

the intervals waxing longer and more marked; till at length their fretful bickerings were hushed, and there was silence once more upon the mountains. Night had imposed an armistice, and cast her sable veil over the dead and dying that lay there freezing in the snow and bitter cold. At roll-call that night it was found that, out of 2400 men, 800 were killed and wounded. The same night Baker retreated with his guns to Isladi, where the troops bivouacked in the snow, and the following morning he rejoined Shakir Pacha at Petrich.

“To have witnessed the battle of Tash-Kessan is one of the proudest recollections of my life, and one that I never recall without some glow of the old enthusiasm that animated us on that day recurring to me. As instances of generalship, this engagement, and the manner in which Baker subsequently covered the retreat to the sea, stand out alone in the war; there is nothing to compare with them. In losing Baker we have lost a great General—one possessed of endless resource, unflinching determina-

tion, unconquerable energy, a peculiar insight into the feeling of the men he commands, and wonderful tact in managing them. Whether we still possess men of equal ability it is impossible to say, but certainly we have no General who has as yet given signs of the same order of genius that he undeniably possesses, for we have no one who has been as highly tested."

"By the holy, but you're right. He must be a mighty fine fellow!" says Tip. "And what did you do when the fight was over?"

"Well, I had a deuced long and unpleasant ride. I got back to my quarters, and, changing my horse, started at once on the line of retreat to take the news down. We marched all night through the mountains, and several times had to halt whilst men went forward to probe the snow and feel for the road. All along the route the wounded were dropping and dying, and every now and then my horse would shy right across the track at one of them, and flounder into a snow-drift. I remember he

gave me two or three glorious croppers in the course of the night. The worst of it was, I had got adrift from any one I knew, and was afraid of being seized as a Russian spy — a very unpleasant experience, which had previously happened to me twice. To explain that I was a correspondent would have been useless and almost impossible; so to the numerous challenges I received I savagely replied, ‘Ingiliz hakim’ (English doctor). At length I fell in with a detachment of cavalry, and an officer shouted the unwelcome ‘Kim var?’

“ ‘Ingiliz hakim.’

“ ‘Neraye gideorsiniz?’ (Where are you going?)

“ ‘Bazardjic-eh’ (To Bazardjick).

“ ‘Guel bouraya’ (Come here).

“Needless to say, I came, and then in the darkness I recognized the figure of a Hungarian officer in Baker’s cavalry. I spoke to him in German, and he knew me instantly, so for the rest of the night I remained with him. About six a.m. we

reached Petrich. At half-past nine I started again, and rode all day and all night to Bazardjick, which I reached between seven and eight next morning. I only halted about two hours and a half on the way, but the ground was so slippery that it was impossible to venture out of a walk. At Bazardjick I saw Fuad Pacha, the commandant, who was in utter darkness with regard to Shakir's movements, and thought the whole force had been surrounded and taken prisoners some days before. He, of course, was delighted to hear from me of their escape, and telegraphed the news at once to Constantinople. The same day I drove on to Philippopolis and sent my own letters off."

CHAPTER X.

SAN FRANCISCO.

DURING the last twelve hours before entering the Golden Gates, we averaged thirteen knots an hour under sail; the *Witch* behaving admirably, as she always does in heavy weather. Indeed, the harder it blows the better she likes it. San Francisco has so frequently been described by abler pens than mine, that a detailed account of my impressions and of our stay there would be hardly worth recording. Still I cannot pass over entirely in silence the place where we spent by far the pleasantest part of an uniformly pleasant voyage.

About mid-day the reporter of a local paper boarded us, and, having obtained a few details with regard to the yacht's

performances, very kindly offered to pilot us through the principal parts of the town. H—— remained on board ; S——, F——h, and I went on shore. During the walk a heavy norther sprang up—the heaviest experienced here for many years—and when we returned to the wharf, some difficulty arose about getting off. The shore boats were small and only one of us could go at a time. S—— and F——h, therefore, spent the night at the Palace Hotel, whilst I went off, and at the third trial, drenched thoroughly from head to foot, succeeded in reaching the yacht, which had dragged her anchors and was fast drifting on to the wharfs. They were getting up steam on board. A quarter of an hour later we weighed anchor, and moved across the bay to more secure anchorage. In the saloon I found H—— undergoing a rigid cross-examination from another reporter. He looked very much like a schoolboy who didn't know his lesson and expected to be turned back.

“ Yes, and where did you go after that ? ”

"Well, after that—oh, Havana. No, not Havana; that was another voyage. Let me see. Where did we go, F——? where did we go after—where was it you said? Siam?—after Siam?"

"Say," said the reporter, arresting his pencil a moment, "is it very rough outside?"

"Not a bad imitation of it."

"Oh, I do feel so almighty sick! You didn't see my boat alongside?"

"No. I'm afraid you will have to stay here till to-morrow. The wind is rising rapidly."

He rushed on deck to interview the pilot, who had just come on board, but returned in a few minutes, looking sadder than ever.

"Say, any other newspaper man been on board to-day?"

"A reporter came off at mid-day."

"For the ——?"

"Yes."

"Ah! I know him. He's paid my boatman not to fetch me. I shall miss the

evening paper, and he'll beat me again. I shall have to paste that chap on the snout."

"I'll put you on shore if I can," said H——, touching a bell. "Satan, send the captain to me."

In a few minutes he arrived.

"Edlefsen, I want you to put this gentleman on shore if you can."

The old fellow looked grave. "Sir T——, I can't do it. The pilot came off at some risk. If a boat went ashore it couldn't get back to-night, and we're short-handed already. Of course, sir, if you say it must be done——"

H—— turned to the reporter.

"Oh, it's all right; guess I must stay. Say, captain, you'll put me ashore early in the morning?"

"Certainly, sir."

Shortly after this the reporter retired to a cabin, as he said with a sickly smile, to think of home, for he felt "emotional." About eleven o'clock he reappeared again in a less studious frame of mind, and for the rest of the evening proved a very bright

and amusing companion, full of anecdotes and quaint witticisms. I must say he gave us credit for boundless credulity, and when he began to discuss mining speculations and miners' fortunes, he indulged in numbers and rows of figures such as ordinary beings are only accustomed to see used in connection with astronomical calculations.

The yacht was able on the following day to return to her old anchorage, where H—— received visits from several gentlemen to whom he had brought letters of introduction. On the same day the Union Club extended to our whole party the privilege of honorary membership. We subsequently experienced similar courtesy from the Bohemian, German, and Olympic Clubs. Indeed, from the moment we landed until the day we left, we met with nothing but the most genial kindness and boundless hospitality on all hands.

An American, until you know him and he knows you, will appear touchy, self-assertive, and extremely sensitive. He is

cautious in making advances, and if he offers you one hand is ready to counter you with the other, in case you should not meet his civility in the spirit in which it is offered. This is hardly his fault. English residents in California have told me that they have frequently witnessed behaviour on the part of English visitors that made them ashamed of their nationality and admitted of no excuse. Men who have previously travelled but little or not at all, come out there fresh from London, filled with that ineffable confidence in their own immeasurable superiority to any other being on the face of the earth that most Englishmen start with, and indulge in airs and graces—"show off," in fact, in a manner—that would excite the derision and pity of their friends at home. It is more than probable that the supercilious contempt they exhibit for anything which differs slightly from what they have been accustomed to, is simply affected, but it is none the less insolent and disagreeable. Once break through the uneasi-

ness which is apparent during the first few hours of your acquaintance with an American, meet him frankly half-way, and a better fellow does not exist.

During our stay in San Francisco we put up at the Palace Hotel—the largest, I believe, in the world. Accommodation can be provided in it for fifteen hundred people, and twelve hundred have already been lodged at one time there. It is furnished with five “lifts” or “elevators,” one of which makes from seventeen to eighteen hundred trips in the twenty-four hours. These lifts neutralize the preference that would otherwise be shown for the lower floors, and the sixth floor, or highest of all, is the most sought after and frequented, owing to the fact of its being lighter, more airy, and just as easy to reach as the first. Besides the lifts there are the ordinary staircases. Each floor possesses its own fire hoses and escape ladders, and has access to escape staircases of iron. On the first floor there is a suite of three large and handsomely furnished “parlours”

or reception-rooms for general use. In the laundry forty-five Chinamen, as well as sundry white women, are employed. The washing, pressing, wringing, mangling, ironing, etc., are all performed by machinery; there is even a machine for converting soap into lather. The drying room, too, is ingenious. Then the butchery, bakery, kitchens, etc., with their various mechanical appliances for economizing labour, are worth glancing through. From fifteen to twenty cooks are, under ordinary circumstances, employed. Water is obtained from three artesian wells. Formerly the hotel made its own gas, but since the introduction of the electric light has diminished the consumption of gas by one-half, it is procured from the public works. From the shops on the ground floor nearly everything can be obtained, and the hotel is thus almost independent of extraneous assistance. Its worst feature is the attendance, which is bad. With this exception it is well managed, and we liked it exceedingly.

The drive to the Cliff House through the park is pleasant. The park, which has been reclaimed at a great expense from sandhills, is well kept and laid out with excellent roads. Here you may see scores of neat carriages and fine trotters. One fault alone can be found with the equipages, but to an English eye it is sufficiently grave. The horses may be the best-matched and handsomest pair that money can procure, the carriage a model of coachbuilder's art, the ladies within it faultlessly attired, but on the box a ruffian in a slouch hat and any sort of costume handles the ribbons, and spoils the whole turn-out. His driving may be artistic, but his appearance is often very unprepossessing. Liveries are opposed to American notions, and so far that is perfectly comprehensible, but surely it would be possible for a coachman to dress himself neatly and quietly without adopting a livery.

The park is a favourite resort of the San Franciscans; on a fine afternoon it is thronged with carriages. San Francisco is

noted for the beauty of its women; moreover, they display what has long been recognized in Europe as characteristic of American women, namely, great taste in dressing. The first time "Tip" and I came home from driving in the park, it was with a very fair imitation of stiff necks from constantly looking round; but had the penalty been that which befel Lot's wife, we had been so long away from civilization that I am afraid we should have recklessly risked being converted into chloride of sodium.

The days of the sea-lions at the Cliff House are numbered. Lately the fishermen complained that they destroyed the fishing, and the law for their preservation was repealed by the Californian Congress.

Some Americanisms strike the new arrival as very funny. A tobacconist one day recommended me what he called "a nice little domestic cigar"—why I can't imagine, for I am wont to believe that as yet there is nothing very parental in my appearance. A man may be "a way-up man—high up—very up indeed," if he is of any note. A

girl may be "built up from the word go," or it may be said "she don't pretty much." You may "want to win so badly that you can taste it," or you can "see it sticking out a foot that you are going to lose." If you are apt to give yourself airs, it may be you will hear some one remark that "you are hanging out rather more than you can dry;" if you do, you will know what it means, and you can "divide the statement amongst the company present, and take your share in believing it or not," as you think fit. Our slang is as new to them as theirs is to us, and more than once we were called upon to construe "duffer" and similar expressions. In reality, though, one is surprised to find how free the Californians are from accent and Americanisms. It is rare in San Francisco to hear any one speaking with a pronounced inflection; it is frequently either absent entirely, or scarcely perceptible. There are less of those minute national differences in appearance, dress, etc., between the inhabitants of England and San Francisco, than between

England and Scotland, and infinitely less difference in accent. The Californians are thorough Englishmen, and Englishmen of a fine type too—good natured, hospitable, and kindly to a degree rarely met with elsewhere. I allude in these notes more exclusively to Californians, as my acquaintance with America is limited to the one State.

San Francisco is at present in a transition state. Her unparalleled outburst of prosperity arose, of course, from successful mining speculations. But for some time past mines have been going down, down, down; the old leads are gradually being worked out, and no new ones of importance have been struck to replace them. Mining prosperity is, and must always be, of a more or less ephemeral and fluctuating character. It is to be questioned whether a state once fairly started in its career, and possessed of other natural advantages, derives any actual benefit from the possession of mines. On the contrary, inasmuch as this attribute diverts men from

agriculture and commerce, on which, if it would be well founded and stable, the wealth of a country must ever depend, and, moreover, infuses into all classes an aversion to steady industry, a spirit of reckless extravagance, and a propensity for gambling, it is doubtful whether mining wealth does not actually retard the progress of a state. San Francisco sprang up like a mushroom, and that which was achieved by the royal road of mining wealth has now to be substantiated by trade. At present she has outgrown her strength, for the increase of her commercial interests has naturally not been sufficiently rapid to maintain her in her former condition of prosperity independently of mining aid. She has ceased for the moment to advance. Her population, if not absolutely decreasing, is at any rate stationary. Lately she has had also the uneasiness caused by agitators amongst the working classes to contend against. These are all matters which in process of time will right themselves, and San Francisco, with its wonderful

position, backed by the marvellous fertility of California, has before it a future of great, if not unexampled, prosperity. There is every reason to suppose, moreover, that the ore procured from the Californian mines is but as a drop in the ocean by comparison with what remains. Beside the unexplored tracts of land those already prospected sink into insignificance. Old miners tell you that the country is all gold. With special legislation, and a strong government to regulate mining operations, these sources of wealth might be turned to unqualified advantage; otherwise, though a few individuals will benefit, the state in the long run may find such gains are like the unreal fairy gold of story-books which crumbles at the touch. The present depression in mining affairs is, at any rate, of no real disadvantage, as it leads to the development of other resources and is a pause that gives the more legitimate branches of industry time to increase their strength and influence, so that in the event of future gold rushes they may be the better able to

stand the strain and maintain the balance of things.

A great point of difference between the English and Americans as nations lies in the fact that with us the public welfare is nobody's business, with them it is everybody's business. They take matters of public moment in a serious manner, and not, as we too often do, apathetically. An instance of their vigorous civism and public spirit was noticeable in the rapidity with which some recent threats of incendiarism from the low Irish loafers called into being a vigilance committee, numbering some ten thousand strong, thoroughly organized, and composed of the most respectable inhabitants in the town. Fortunately it was never required to take action, but it was none the less ready to be called out at any moment when circumstances should render such a course needful. This is but a forcible exhibition of the feeling one sees displayed on all sides in everyday life. They do not procrastinate in such matters; they settle them at once.

Lesseps arrived during our stay in San

Francisco, on business connected with the proposed canal through the Isthmus of Panama. He was well received and hospitably entertained, but his scheme was regarded with a feeling akin to jealousy, as likely, if successful, to deprive San Francisco of part of the China trade, and consequently it received but little or no support. He told the San Franciscans that he did not want money from them; in fact, that he already had sufficient subscribed or promised to carry out his enterprise. But with a significant droop of the dexter eyelid, the San Franciscan sayeth blandly, "We've sold too many mines not to understand that talk." They assert that the scheme is impracticable for many reasons; bearing in mind, however, the Pacific railroad and the Suez Canal, the project loses in contemplation its alleged wildness. One of the chief difficulties to contend against will be the malaria which is said to arise as soon as the earth there is disturbed. One American put the matter to me very tersely, but in true American style.

“Look here !” he said. “The world isn’t going fooling all around the Horn, when it can cut across the Isthmus for a few hundred million dollars. It stands to reason ; look at the map.”

It is only by carefully bearing in mind that thirty years ago San Francisco was not, and its present site was simply a sand-heap, that one thoroughly appreciates the extraordinary energy and enterprise to which it bears witness. Fine streets, fine shops, immense hotels, handsome public buildings, theatres, tramways, cable roads, steam ferries, suburbs, etc., are all there. It possesses every modern appliance for comfort, expedition, and convenience. Some of the streets are almost roofed with a trellis-work of telephone and telegraph wires. The telephone is to be found in every office, and not only is it universally used in business, but its advantages have been recognized and utilized in private life. Scores of people living a little distance out of the city have a telephone wire that connects their house with a central office.

A lady has simply to state to the clerk at the office that she wishes to speak to some one at, say, the Union or Pacific Club. The wires are immediately connected, and she can call her husband from his lunch to receive the rest of that curtain lecture he fled from in the morning, or tell him to bring Mr. So-and-so home to dinner. She can order anything to be sent up to the house, from a fire engine to a packet of pins, and can take stalls at the theatre or call a cab. Ladies to whom I have mentioned this since my return to England have, without exception, highly approved of it; but the married men fail to see its merits, and with equal unanimity have condemned it. "Oh, that wouldn't do at all; my wife would be always shopping. She would sit at home and shop all day," said one, whilst another family man remarked that "he would take his name off any club that started a telephone wire."

The dearness of labour has probably influenced the Americans in so rapidly and extensively adopting inventions of this

nature. Everything in America seems to work itself. There is not the same prolonged confusion, bustle, and din when anything has to be done that is to be noticed in England. No dozens of myrmidons rush to and fro, obstructing more than they assist; no clanging bells or hoarse shoutings deafen you. You hear the familiar "tic" of an electric bell, machinery is quietly set in motion, and the thing, whatever it may be, is done. An automatic system of service seems to prevail in everything.

H—— and I were invited one Sunday morning, whilst at San Francisco, to a little breakfast party at the trotting track, and were driven out there by a well-known sporting gentleman—I had almost said sportsman, but in America I believe the meaning of the word has been perverted to "blackleg." The track measures, if I remember rightly, exactly a mile, and possesses a grand stand, stables, and an hotel. On Sunday mornings it is a great rendezvous for the owners of trotters, or those interested in

them, and during the forenoon the track is usually occupied by well-known horses. The morning we were there St. Julien, the fastest horse in the United States, whose record for a mile is 2 min. 12 $\frac{3}{4}$ sec., had three spins. He was then getting into condition preparatory to going east on a starring tour of exhibition trotting. We subsequently visited the flyer in his box, where a groom watches him day and night. The sulky he is driven in does not weigh fifty pounds. His owner, Mr. Moreau, is said to have refused ten thousand dollars for him lately.

Whilst in San Francisco I sometimes heard the probability of the United States continuing to hold together discussed, not simply by Californians, but by men from all parts of America. The question was debated without the least display of feeling—indeed, without reference to feeling at all—but simply and purely from a commercial point of view; and it was generally argued that as trade increased, and the various branches of industry that obtain in different parts

of the States grew and extended, interests would clash to such a degree that it would be found impossible for one government to secure the advantage of all parties, and a separation would ensue. The difficulty of ruling, collectively, a people subject to such diverse climates and conditions of country has never been permanently overcome, except by the Chinese; and as the American nation grows older, as the population increases, becomes more settled, and consequently less perceptibly influenced by the disturbing element of foreign emigration, the local character of the people will gradually assume more distinctive traits. Modifications in temperament and character will naturally result in course of time from difference in pursuits, climate, and country, and the development of opposed ideas with regard to government will as naturally be the consequence. One is surprised here to hear the frequently expressed desire for a stronger—in other words, a more absolute—government, and the equally general condemnation of universal suffrage. This

may be transient irritation occasioned by the uneasiness and trouble lately caused by the agitation amongst the working classes and loafers; still it sounds strange on American lips.

Scarcely less remarkable to a stranger is the constantly recurring expression, "good family," in conversation. To trace descent from an old "Knickerbocker family" seems to be considered in much the same light as to have "come in with the Conqueror" is in England. Americans are apt to ridicule English pretensions on this score, yet while in America I certainly heard "family" more frequently and seriously discussed than I ever did during the same space of time in England. Pride of family, like *esprit de corps*, has of course its obvious merits, but if it is to increase here, America only requires time to become as aristocratic as any country in Europe. I cannot say that I noticed that undue impatience of criticism and propensity for national boasting often attributed to Americans. Of late years America's power and

qualities have been more generously recognized in Europe. She is allowed the position she deserves; her claims are acknowledged; the feeling of irritation that made Americans intolerant of criticism is consequently dying out, and the fancied necessity for boasting no longer exists.

At San Francisco the yacht was docked, as she had lost several sheets of copper and wanted a little overhauling. Here H—— also had two fine whaleboats built, in place of the cutter, which had been smashed on the passage from Yokohama, and the gig, which he got rid of. Both boats had been too light for rough work and weather. Poor Edouard, the French *chef*, leaves the yacht here. He has long been ailing, and the doctors have at length decided that he has only one lung left. So he returns to France and a mild climate. He is one of those extremely *rare aves*, a servant without fault and a pearl of a cook.

CHAPTER XI.

EN ROUTE FOR ALASKA.

NUMEROUS postponements for dances, dinner-parties, etc., had extended our stay in San Francisco from a fortnight (as originally intended) to within a day or so of six weeks. H—— at length, fearing to be late in Alaska, hardened his heart, refused to entertain any more of the ingenious reasons for still prolonging the visit that our cordial and hospitable friends advanced on all sides, and fixed upon the 15th of April for our departure. For the ensuing few days life on board seemed fearfully dull and monotonous, an experience entirely new to us. Hitherto we had invariably returned with pleasure to the yacht's routine, but on this occasion we had been so kindly

received (mainly by members of the Union Club, with whom we were in constant intercourse), and our visit had been altogether so delightful and full of gaiety, that some time elapsed before we settled down again.

With tolerable weather Juan de Fuca Straits were entered on the morning of the 20th. The coast scenery on the way up was in places very fine, and consisted chiefly of rugged snow-capped ranges, the lower spurs of which were clothed with pine trees. Near the entrance to the straits we passed several schools of whales and fur seals. Contrary winds obliged us to anchor shortly afterwards for the night in Callum Bay, an amphitheatre of rocks and sombre pine trees.

In the afternoon we went ashore to stretch our legs and visit a settlement of Flat-Heads near the beach. Dirty, sallow-complexioned, stolid, ugly, square-faced, low-browed, low-built loafers, neither savage nor civilized men, they dwelt in pine-board barns, the foul interiors of which were in perfect keeping with the exteriors of

their owners. A crowd of hungry looking dogs snarled enviously round our heels, and an old she Methuselah cutting wood on a hillside near, shouted what might certainly have been a prolonged welcome, but it sounded to my untutored British ear far more like a tirade of strongly emphasized abuse. Strolling through the forest, we passed two or three extremely picturesque and sketchy little acre and half-acre Indian clearings. A short walk brought us to the stream—a lovely looking piece of water for trout, although no fish were visible. I had a favourite little twelve-bore Grant with me, H—— also was armed, and as “Joe” was “on the hunt,” we bagged three brace of ducks by following the stream down to the sea.

Just as we were stepping into the gig to return to the yacht, Joe was reported missing. He had been noticed a short way back, and the men went to look for him. “Joe! Joe! Joe! good dog Joe!” We all turned out to search, and “Joe! Joe! Joe!” in various tones, both high and low,

seductive and chiding, went up the river and down the river, and through the forest and along the beach, backwards and forwards ; but no glad yelp answered us, for the familiar bark was never to be heard again.

“ Please, Sir T——, I’ve found Joe. He’s drowned in the river,” said the bo’sun at length, with a tear in his eye.

Poor wilful Joe, the pet of the whole ship’s company, and one of the best water-dogs that ever was bred, drowned ! We could hardly believe it. But when we went to look at him, where he floated head downwards in a little eddy, and saw that his tail did not cock, the melancholy truth was forced upon us ; for, had he possessed a crest and motto, it would have been a stump tail cocked, and the one word “ Excelsior.” Alas, poor Joe ! poor old, pig-headed, obstinate Don Jose ! He was dead ! After seeing dogs, cats, monkeys, and other live stock go before him, his own turn had come at last. He had passed in his cheques ; from his earthly tenement

Death, the great landowner, had evicted him, and, poor old tenant, he had gone all alone. We lifted him out and carried him down to the shore. There, with our hands, we scooped a shallow grave for him in the sand, and lined it with sea-flowers and fair weeds. Then, having cut curly locks off him for some of the ladies of San Francisco with whom he was a favourite, we arranged his limbs decently, closed his eyes, and covered him up. Above the grave a driftwood monument was set, and round about it shells were placed, to mark his resting-place. The ceremony was concluded by a salute of four guns.

“Oh, weep for a Don José! he is dead!
Wake, melancholy mother, wake and weep!
Yet wherefore? Quench within their burning bed
Thy fiery tears, and let thy loud heart keep,
Like his, a mute and uncomplaining sleep,
For he is gone where all things wise and fair
Descend. Oh, dream not that the amorous deep
Will yet restore him to the vital air.

Death feeds on his mute bark and laughs at our despair.”

“I didna think puir Joe wad hae been

called awa' frae us like this," remarked one of the men, a solemn Scot.

"Joe! Joe warn't never called, or he'd have been here now," said the bo'sun scornfully. "He was a —— good dog, Joe was, but he was proper contrary."

Well, there was nothing else to be done ; so there we left him, under the long-thrown funereal shadows of nodding pine-tree plumes, whilst the wind in the branches near him, the ripple of waves on the long, lone strand, and the wild cry of the sea-bird sailing by chanted his requiem sadly, and wafted his spirit to the sunset land beyond seas. Long e'er this Joe will be wagging his angel stump tail and barking around Peter's gate. If Peter wants any peace he had better let him in at once. The only way we could account for his untimely end was by the supposition that he had been seized with a fit. As he had had one at Kobe, and latterly had been ailing, this seemed not improbable.

About twelve o'clock next day the yacht wound her way through the narrow intricate

entrance to Victoria, and dropped anchor in the tiny bay. The aspect of Victoria is remarkably pretty. It contains about seven thousand inhabitants. Formerly the population was much larger, but Victoria (only in an aggravated form) has experienced, like San Francisco, the instability of mining prosperity.

Leaving Victoria next morning, the yacht's course lay through the Haro Archipelago. The scenery in this inland sea is grand. Fortunately the weather, now and for some days afterwards, could hardly have been finer, and as on we went through the sunny hours beneath soft pearly skies, each view, showing with photographic clearness in the pure air, seemed more charming than the last. Now our course lay through narrow rushing channels where the water boiled and eddied over deep-sunken rocks, and now across glassy lochs whose wind-deserted surfaces were stirred only by the splash and dripping of rising ducks, and whose pleasing shores were nook-shotten with tiny bays, wherein

might here and there be seen a small cutter at anchor, or a few canoes drawn up on the beach near the solitary pine-shaded log cabin of a recluse hunter. In the foreground were rocky stones, which had been rugged and wild but for the indescribable richness of the heavy mosses that clung around them and, blending their own endless varieties of colour with wondrous softness, knit rock to rock with tones that soothed away all trace of harshness. Further removed were pine-clad hills, from deepest green, waxing purple, and in the far-off distance dim pale blue. Behind them rose range upon range of inland snowy mountains and glittering peaks ice-helmed—

“Hills peep o’er hills and Alps on Alps arise;”

whilst resting on these, towered battlements of piled clouds wrought in fantastic imagery. But the most striking trait in this impressive northern scenery is not so much the colour of it, though that is truly grand, nor the far-reaching landscapes that

a fine morning offers ; it is its stillness, the perfect quiet, the absence of that "poetry of earth" that's "never dead" in lower latitudes. There is but one voice here, the voice of the wind ; when that is hushed, nature preserves a reverential silence. No ceaseless drone of insect life, no song of birds, no harsh clang of mankind working, breaks through the silence, and one seems to view everything as it were through the medium of a glass door or window.

We steamed into Nonaimo about four o'clock. Nonaimo derives its importance from coal mines. It contains about a thousand inhabitants, a few hundred Indians, and a few Chinamen. In the afternoon Mr. Prior, the Government agent, came on board to visit us, and when he returned on shore we accompanied him to call on Captain Spalding, the Government magistrate, from whom we hoped to glean information with regard to the fishing in the neighbourhood. For the next two days the yacht would be coaling, and, as at Nonaimo itself there is nothing to be seen or done, we depended

upon fishing for amusement. In Captain Spalding we made a delightful acquaintance. He was a thorough sportsman of the old school, and an Englishman of a type unfortunately becoming rare. It made one half dissatisfied with roaming to see the charming little place he dwelt in. We were greeted with regular old-fashioned courtesy and heartiness, and soon were deep in angler's mysteries. The fly-book, that weather-worn *Agnus dei* of the fisherman, was brought out and turned over with reverential fingers. Flies were examined in the light; the "wood-duck's wing" and "furnace hackle" commented on; the set of wings, the legs, the tone of body discussed with becoming gravity. Rods were produced, put together, handled, balanced, and criticised, etc. Who that is a fisherman knows not the scene, and where is the true brother of the craft who ever wearies of it? Captain Spalding has been here for many years, and after wide travelling declares the climate to be the finest in the world, no colder than England in winter,

less variable, and blessed with far longer summers. Sport of all kinds, from big game to trout, though not what it used to be, is still fine. For the benefit of later comers, I may say that heavy double-handed, green-heart rods, almost grilse rods, and large flies are required to do any good with the trout here.

Our chances of sport were slight. At present there were no fish in the river, and the most we could expect was an odd brace or two of stragglers. Still, as I was anxious to try a new rod I had ordered from England of Farlow, I started next morning in the dingey for the mouth of the Nonaimo river. The greater part of the morning we spent in getting aground in the bay, as we missed the river channel. Finally the tide left us high and dry, so I walked across the mud flats, and left the men to follow when it rose again.

After fishing some distance up stream, a farm cottage came in sight, and I went up to ask if the owners had a canoe and a boy who could show me the best casts.

should think, and very girlish—just a slim slip of a girl, active as a deer. Beneath her short rough kirtle appeared bare ankles, small and rounded; they were splashed with mud, but none the less shapely. No hat or snood confined her glossy golden brown hair; its tangled and unkempt masses were simply tossed, or thrust back from time to time from her oval face. But when you looked at her first you seemed to see nothing but eyes—great, blue, far-away eyes, so dark beneath their long lashes that they seemed almost black. In the small brown face they glowed like lamps, and monopolized all scrutiny. A nose “tip-tilted,” and mobile lips a thought too large, were——

“You’d better be fishing all away down here,” said my wild-looking, though lovely boatwoman, glancing shyly down at her paddle in the water in a manner that recalled me to the object of our trip.

Half reluctantly, I caught up the rod and began to reel off line and fish. With consummate ease she guided the light dug-

out down the swift "ruffles," as she called them, steadying it, and pausing here and there near a good cast, whilst she volunteered an occasional hint as to the working of them. There was a peculiar charm in the situation. Imagine to yourself, reader, a light canoe and a warm, still summery afternoon: she in the stern, silently dipping her paddle here and there, or with slight turn of wrist directing your course; you in the bows, lazily casting now and then, and thinking how

"Small is the worth
Of beauty from the light retired,"

and what a pity it was that such a face should be "born to blush unseen;" whilst on you drifted down a winding stream, each bend of which, with its lights and shades, its eddies and rapids, its masses of grey rock, piled mosses, and overhanging foliage, was a picture of marvellous beauty. We only caught a brace of fish, but I didn't complain.

Next day the *Witch* finished coaling, and the following morning we left. Seymour

Narrows, an exceedingly ugly bit of navigation and the scene of one or two wrecks, were passed in the evening. The yacht then anchored for the night, and stopped at Fort Rupert the succeeding evening. We arrived, however, too late to land, even had there been—and we were told there was not—anything to repay us for doing so. In the course of the evening H—— received an exceedingly polite note from the Bishop of Caledonia, who, in travelling round his diocese, had paused at this out-of-the-way corner of the world. He wrote to recommend him, if proceeding up the coast, to take the passage inside Queen Charlotte's Island, where the scenery was remarkably fine. We unfortunately were unable to follow his lordship's advice, as our course was now direct to Kodiak. Fort Rupert is inhabited by one white man, a native of Dorsetshire, who, for over five and twenty years, has not even been as far from home as Nonaimo, but, perfectly contented with his lot, prefers to live here amongst his Indian family and the natives.

"When we were passing the
 mountain, we saw the
 clouds of smoke in the air and
 part of the time it was like the
 at night, reached Indian Territory. It
 was in darkness at midnight. The
 in the morning we approached the
 shore of the Gulf. Several times
 scattered fish bones, wrapped in
 seaweed, and got each one a silver
 cup. Yellow grass, dead since the
 winter, grew over all the hills. The
 broken only by patches of snow or
 woods of spruce-pine trees of the
 richest green, tipped with golden points in
 every sprig and branch. Peaked ranges of
 pure white mountains rose behind like
 specters—phantom monarchs, majestic and
 beautiful, but unreal looking and strange.

"Well, Mike, so that is Alaska, eh?"

Michaelovitch Nenovitch (a Montenegrin and the pilot who had come with us from San Francisco) removes his heavy meerschaum to indulge in the laughter that is always bubbling from his moustached lips.

“Yes, sir, dat Kodiak (starboard); 'Laska close by. Der you find all bears you want (starboard); more too. Come right 'long beach some time; nee'n't look for 'em. Now, sir, dis Kodiak (hard a-port). What you s'pose dem dam scamp call me here? (Starboard.) Well, sir, you know my name—Mike Nenovitch, eh? Well, pretty fine, eh? Dey call me Mike Sonov——”

However, we won't repeat Mike's nickname, although from the way in which he laughs at the rhyme, he appears to regard it as rather a compliment.

The village of Kodiak—or perhaps I should say Kodiak City, for when we landed one of the inhabitants, in the course of conversation, mentioned that on account of a wedding the “city” had been in an uproar on the previous evening, and subsequently I heard it frequently so denominated—Kodiak City, then, contains two hundred inhabitants, all Indians and Creoles, with the exception of eight or ten white men. They are the Russian priest, the Custom-House officer, and the

agents and employées of the Alaska and Western Fur Trading Companies, which possess stations here.

Shortly before we arrived, a new priest had been installed, and finding that under the too indulgent sway of his predecessor the morals of the congregation and their regard for religious observances had lapsed into laxity, he was, as we were informed, "giving them a regular straightening out. Yes, sir, you bet they're having a way-up time just now. Old man priest he's told 'em they was all going to hell in winter clothing straight away, if they didn't purify. For my part, I wish they'd hurry up and purify, or be d——d right now, and stop that 'tarnal bell, for it's going all day and night too."

Most of the white inhabitants visited us on board, and dined and breakfasted with us whilst we were there. They exhibited the heartiest desire to entertain us and do all in their power to make our visit agreeable; at the same time, they could not forbear occasionally romancing a little

for our benefit. The bear tales (bears have tales here) were thrilling, although at times a little "too thin." Bears in this part of the world would seem to be exceedingly numerous and ferocious. Nine "bars" at a time was no unusual sight, and from the numberless narrow escapes we were told of, the frequency with which "the bar he went for me," the many times "you should jess have seen me put"—in other words, run—and the invariable success with which they "plugged him when he was jess two yards off; yes, sir, 'bout time too, you bet," bear hunting in Alaska appeared to be an exciting and, in the highest degree, dangerous sport, to be indulged in only by the most reckless and daring temperaments. It was reassuring to observe the state of excellent preservation in which our informants had contrived to pass through the dangers they had encountered.

Mr. Washbourne, agent of the Alaska Fur Trading Company, was kind enough to show us the stock of furs they happened to have on hand. Amongst them,

besides mink, marten, land otter, bear, ermine, red and cross fox, and wolverine, there were a number of sea-otter and silver fox furs. It was a sight a woman would have revelled in. The sea-otter, of jet black, with silver points or long single silver hairs, and the silver fox furs are the two handsomest skins for purposes of dress that the world can show. There they were strung up in a loft to long poles, in bunches of eight or ten. It was an interesting sight if only to have an opportunity of learning how little of the sea-otter and silver fox fur worn in Europe is genuine, and how slight the resemblance is between the real skins and their imitations. A handsome and really first-rate sea-otter skin is worth from £70 to £95, and a good silver fox pelt will fetch £25 or £30; indeed, they have been known to realize, even in Victoria, as much as £50. A white trapper we met informed us that he and two partners had made £1200 during the last winter hunting sea-otters. The prices trappers receive from the companies are

widely disproportionate to the prices the latter demand. In this instance our informant said that their skins are exceptionally fine and level, but had averaged sixty dollars, or £12. Indians receive still less, thirty-five dollars being the average price this season.

Anxious to afford us every possibility of amusement, Messrs. Washbourne, Fisher, Hirshe, and Smart gave a ball to the Creoles, and invited us to it. Seldom have I been more surprised than I was to witness the dancing of these Kodiak belles. Their waltzing would have shown to advantage in any European saloon. They danced the *trois temps* and executed the reverse in the most easy and finished style. When Alaska was handed over to America by the Russians, three companies of United State soldiers were quartered in Kodiak, and from them it appears that, aided by natural talent, they speedily acquired this accomplishment. Our ball-room was an old barrack-room, possessing an excellent floor, to improve which wax candles had

been scraped and rubbed in. **Flags** and **spruce-pine** boughs formed the **decorations**. The music consisted of an **accordian**, a **concertina**, a **penny whistle**, and a **banjo**, on which latter instrument one of our men occasionally accompanied himself, and varied the entertainment with a song. Introductions and programmes were dispensed with. The ladies when not dancing sat in a line against the wall, along one side of the room. From the opposite side you reconnoitred, made up your mind, and then crossed and bore off your anything but blushing partner.

Considerable rivalry exists amongst the belles of Kodiak "city," although to an outsider it would appear that their claims to beauty are in no case worth pressing, and certainly elsewhere would be most unlikely to excite feelings of jealousy or admiration. However, everything is judged by comparison, and so perhaps it may be with beauty in Kodiak. Certain it is that in more civilized regions a severe shock would be inflicted on the nervous system

of any lady-killer who was called upon to embrace "the beautiful Nadir." Here she is the "Kodiac lily," the cynosure of all eyes and the object of universal devotion. When this Northern Queen frowns the Creole beau languishes, and when she smiles his happiness is supreme. Even white men yield her allegiance.

Supper was served in an adjoining room, and the dancing proceeded with vigour until a late hour, half the population of the "city" being present. In common with the Indians, the Creoles possess a passionate predilection for strong waters. Their ideal conception of happiness is a "good drunk." I doubt whether, notwithstanding what the priest may tell them, drink does not hold a foremost place in their category of the pleasures reserved for them in paradise. No Creole, I am sure, would construct in imagination a paradise without a barrel of "forty-rod" whiskey behind the door. Later on I discussed the subject, through an interpreter, with a guide of ours. His idea was that there

would be "pleenty vodki" in heaven. A Creole will not thank you for a tot of spirits—it is not enough to touch his heart, or rather his head; but make him intoxicated, and you have conferred a favour which commands the gratitude of one whose race are said to be almost devoid of the sentiment. Creole women are, however, shy of exposing this weakness before white people, and though they will not scruple to get tipsy amongst themselves, they sometimes (not often) allow their *amour propre* so far to influence them, that they will even refuse a drink offered them by a white person. I heard of one Kodiak belle who, ornamented with a black eye and other marks of battle gained in an orgie overnight, nevertheless refused the proffered "nip" next morning with great dignity. "No, sar, ladies don't drink in Kodiak."

Owing to the stringent laws against the importation of spirits, it has become almost impossible to purchase any. The natives, therefore, distil it themselves from sugar, molasses, and flour. A simple substitute

for a still is contrived with two kerosene oil cans and a gun barrel. As may be supposed, they are not, like Mrs. Trapes, "very curious in their liquors." If the stuff burns the throat, it is good, and by the extent to which this effect is produced do they measure its quality. '

At a ball given by the officers of a Government ship on one occasion the whiskey ran short. It was as unnatural to expect dancing without whiskey as steam without moisture, so the officers applied to a scientific professor in the Government employ, and begged him to concoct a liquor of some sort. He drew off half the alcohol his specimens were preserved in, diluted it plentifully with water, added tea to colour it and pepper to make it "bite," mixed the whole thoroughly, and presented them with what, considering the purposes for which the alcohol had served, might be termed *punch au cadavre*, or *punch à l'histoire naturel*. However, it was pronounced exquisite. No deaths were announced next morning; but the Creole stomach is about one hundred

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The making of a yacht was an event

unprecedented in the annals of Kodiak. With the exception of the revenue cutter, and a few small trading schooners that at regular intervals touch here, and whose arrivals constitute the sole interruption in the year's monotonous routine, Kodiak is never visited by ships. Moreover, the *Witch* was said to be the only steam vessel the natives had ever beheld; consequently, when the steam launch made its first trip ashore, all the Creole and Indian inhabitants of the place were gathered open-mouthed upon the little wharf, to gaze at the "samovar," or tea-kettle, boat. Greater still was the curiosity and surprise expressed by them at the sight of Jacko the monkey, for he enjoyed the honour of being the first of his race that had visited Kodiak.

stray ducks were all we got; so, after three days' fruitless labour, anchor was weighed at evening, and we woke next morning in Coal Harbour, further up the inlet. One and not the least amidst the charms of yachting as a means of travelling, is this possibility of going to rest in one place and waking, with journey completed, surrounded by entirely different scenery in another.

After reconnoitring the yacht for some time, two natives in a bidarki, or sealskin canoe, came alongside, and were induced by the Creole pilot H—— had brought from Kodiak for Cook's Inlet, to remain with us. In the afternoon we went ashore, under their guidance, to shoot over some marshes. Later on, birds are said to resort here in great numbers. We found only a few, and those few were wild. Our bag was five couple of ducks and three geese.

The following day we made a pleasant, though as far as game was concerned an unsuccessful, excursion to the head of the bay in the steam launch. The natives came as guides, but refused to land, and

stray ducks were all we got; so, after three days' fruitless labour, anchor was weighed at evening, and we woke next morning in Coal Harbour, further up the inlet. One and not the least amidst the charms of yachting as a means of travelling, is this possibility of going to rest in one place and waking, with journey completed, surrounded by entirely different scenery in another.

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derfully effective apparatus. It is a large brick stove built in the partition between the two rooms, or, should the house consist of four chambers, in the midst of their adjoining corners, so that each may derive the benefit of its heat. The upper part contains a number of recurved, sinuous flues or pipes, like the tubes of a cornet. The fire is allowed to burn out, these flues are closed, and the heat, thus confined, does not escape for twenty-four or even thirty-six hours afterwards.

In the village we secured the services of a couple of Creole hunters, and with them started the next morning to return. On the way back I shot some puffins and divers for specimens, and we put into a charmingly situated little Indian ranche. The inhabitants, who were chiefly hunters employed by the Western Fur Company, were busily engaged in repairing their canoes for the summer's work.

There is nothing about the Indians we have seen as yet that invites description. They have arrived at that semi-civilized

stage in which they are wholly uninteresting. All that can be said about them is that they are somewhat dirtier, more ugly, and ragged in appearance than the Creoles, whose cast-off clothing they appear to wear, with the addition of a parki, or long blouse of squirrels' skins.

Coal Harbour proved to be a failure, and on account of the ice we were unable to penetrate further up the inlet, so a couple of days later H—— gave orders to return to Kodiak, with the intention of proceeding westward, where we were told the winter was less rigorous.

The day after our arrival, I left with Mr. Stauf (the agent of the American Russian Trading Company) for a bay about eighteen miles distant, where bears were reported to have made their *début*. We took the launch dingey, Saïd, and three men, proposing to hunt in the evening and early morning, and return next day.

Soon after leaving Kodiak, the sky clouded over, it commenced raining heavily, wind and sea rose, and it became evident

that dirty weather was in store for us. Nothing, however, is more disgusting than, having once started on an expedition, to turn back; we therefore continued, and after a long and exceedingly unpleasant nine miles reached Ozinki, a Creole settlement, at six o'clock. The launch had behaved admirably, but in the heavy swell the dingey was several times almost swept on the top of her, and once, owing to careless steering, came with a rush against her stern that split one of her planks, and narrowly missed damaging her steering apparatus. At Ozinki we were to have taken Wasili, a noted Creole hunter, on board, and continued the trip under his guidance. Fog and weather were, however, by this time so heavy that he declared it useless to attempt to reach the bay that night. The chief of the village put us up very comfortably in a remarkably clean, and for those parts roomy, cottage. Wasili had injunctions to call us at any time during the night, should the weather abate. But morning came without our being disturbed,

and although the fog had cleared, the wind had increased to such an extent that it was impossible to return to Kodiak. There was, however, nothing to prevent our going on to the bay, under the lee of the island. After breakfast, we accordingly left Ozinki, spent the day loitering along the coast in quest of wild-fowl, and arrived towards evening at the bay, having killed only a couple of ducks and a snipe. It was miserable, hopeless sort of weather. Rain and wind had continued without cessation, or even abatement.

We landed at a *barabbora*, or hut, built by our Creole for a summer hunting lodge, and leaving Saïd and the men to make a fire and cook the ducks, went for a long tramp round the head of the bay. Almost needless to say, we returned without success. Meanwhile the wind had shifted, and we were unable now to quit the bay. A *barabbora*, reader, constructed to hold two natives is, as may be supposed, hardly likely to offer spacious accommodation for six Europeans and one native. Moreover,

owing to the assistance we had received at Ozinki, our rum and whiskey had given out, and consequently we had not even the opportunity of regarding the situation through that benign lens, the glass of grog. As yet, however, it was rather a joke. We built a large wood fire in the centre of the hut, packed close, added with tobacco to the atmosphere of smoke, which the wind prevented escaping through the hole in the roof, and passed the evening in drying our clothes.

"Saïd," said I, after a stiffer blast than usual, "ask the Creole whether this wind is likely to last long."

A short conversation in Russian ensued.

"Monsieur, he says that it will endure perhaps three days, perhaps still more."

"And what provisions have we left?"

"Il nous reste encore un peu de café, monsieur."

Despite the unpleasantness of the situation we could not help laughing at its absurdity.

"Mais oui, c'est tout," he affirmed, in-

wardly chuckling over the idea that there would be no cooking to do. That night at dinner we had finished everything with the ducks.

"Then if this wind holds, we shall have nothing to eat to-morrow but the snipe, unless we shoot something."

"It's the worst bay in the island for ducks, besides being too early for them, and there is no chance of finding big game in this weather," said Stauf complacently.

An enormous bearskin, one of his last season's trophies, afforded us a luxurious couch. The others arranged themselves Chinese-puzzle fashion on the small straw-covered floor, and, packed like sardines in a box, we slumbered peacefully. Never but once have I slept in a tighter fit. It was in a Bulgarian hut. Poor "Shipka" Campbell, bravest among the brave even in the Turkish army (since *mort sur le champ de bataille*), was then the life and soul of our party. In a little room about fourteen feet by nine, ten of us slept for two or three nights. There were three horse

gunners, a dragoon, two doctors, the correspondents of the *Morning Post* and *Standard*, "Shipka" Campbell, and myself. Campbell was corresponding at the time for the *Telegraph*; in fact, we were all, or nearly all, writing for some paper or other, and we used to work in committee, reading extracts to one another as we proceeded, and laying claims to certain bits of "copy." I remember there was a mule of the mushir's Campbell determined to monopolize.

"Look here, you fellows, that mule of Mehemet Ali's belongs solely to me. I'm going to trot up the Yildiz Tabia on the mushir, so don't you mention it; and the shell which pitched right at that fellow's feet, and didn't explode—that's mine too. Saïd! Saïd!" (Saïd was his servant then); "bring me *encore* some more coffee *tout suite*."

Some one else put in a claim to "the wounded men coming down the hill, and the dead soldier in the snow," etc., and so on. Then the—— But where the deuce am I getting to? Very sorry,

reader. I can't help it, though; the fact is this particular bear trip was most confoundedly slow. We did nothing but get wet through and dry ourselves again. Of course every one was very good tempered, and laughed over it; still it was not interesting. If I thought you cared to hear, I would tell you how that the second day was worse than the first; how an attempt to get out of the bay signally failed, and only resulted in our running for shelter into a cove on the other side of it, where we found another and a larger barabbora; how Stauf bowled over a stray duck with a long shot just as we were about to land; how every one said it was the best shot he had ever seen; and how that tough old bird and the snipe, stewed with a little seaweed, formed our meal for that day.

The following morning we hunted assiduously, and one of the men tried fishing with the hook of a fly I happened to have in my cap; but the chaste goddess did not favour us, and we saw neither fur, feathers, nor scales. The trip gradually became more

interesting, for the weather showed not the slightest signs of breaking. At mid-day we regaled ourselves on a scanty collection of mussels boiled with seaweed. I was surprised to find mussels and seaweed so palatable; we pronounced them really excellent. The *peu de café*—about enough originally for three cups—was boiled for the third time, and produced seven cups of first-rate warm water.

Towards evening the wind dropped a little and we were enabled to get out of the bay. Our coal was almost exhausted, so we were forced to substitute wood. As was natural in such a case, the men chose damp wood instead of the dry pointed out to them by the Creole. (For such contingencies I always blame my own oversight or laziness, therefore they never put me out.) Just as we were congratulating ourselves, therefore, on the progress we were making, and had settled in our own minds that Ozinki would be reached before the fog became too thick, the revolutions of the screw waxed slower and slower,

it gave a feeble turn, a struggle, and stopped altogether. Ozinki was eight miles off; it was growing foggy, the wind was dead ahead, the fire was out; it was raining placidly; every one was wet through. I may add that a glass of grog and a mutton chop would have sold well on board. The Creole said he knew of a barabbora hard by, so we put up the sail and ran for it, ironically discussing the possibility of procuring good rooms in it, well-aired beds, good cooking and attendance, etc. There were no mussels on this shore, and no seaweed; in fact, the place was altogether badly managed, and I am unable to recommend it. We boiled the coffee again and sipped it with gusto. I did not hear that any one was kept awake by its effects. Fortunately the men had plenty of tobacco to chew. Stauf and I smoked the crumbled leaves of a bad cigar.

Next morning I shot two gulls, and we breakfasted on gull broth. Stauf is a dainty man; he wouldn't eat it. He had tasted gull before, and, like the backwoodsman

who once ate a carrion crow, he said that "he could eat it, but he didn't somehow hanker after it." So he preferred to wait. I tried it as an experiment, but frankly I should not advise any one else to do so.

Having collected some dry wood, we started again for Ozinki, and arrived there about mid-day. Later on, the wind partially favouring us, we sailed and steamed back to Kodiak, where we found that the gig and cutter had been sent in search of us.

At Kodiak they had experienced equally bad weather. Even had we been there the yacht could not, or at any rate would not, have attempted to leave harbour. Our absence, therefore, occasioned no delay.

It cleared up the day after our return, and I tried a fly on some neighbouring lakes; but although they were full of fish not one would rise. It is doubtful whether at any time they would take notice of an artificial fly, unless, perhaps, once in a way by chance, as flies do not exist on the lakes and rivers here. Edlefsen, the sailing-master, an enthusiastic fisherman, went out

in the cutter with the seine. In one haul they took six hundred and eleven sea-trout, besides fifty-four other fish. The largest trout weighed four pounds and a half. They were in fair condition, and proved very delicate eating. We dined in the evening with Stauf, who very good-naturedly made us some handsome presents of skins and specimens of Indian work.

CHAPTER XIII.

CHIGNICK BAY.

WASILI, the Creole hunter mentioned in the last chapter, accompanied us from Kodiak on this occasion. Five years before he had hunted in Chignick Bay, whither we were now bound, and as the place was totally uninhabited, either by white men or natives, we were recommended to take him in the capacity of a shikari. Leaving Kodiak at mid-day, a day intervened before we dropped anchor at early morning in Chignick Bay. It was commonly reported at Kodiak that you could shoot bears here "just as fast as you could load;" in fact, the place was described to us as a sort of bear warren. Making due allowance for exaggeration, or

deducting some four hundred bears a day from this estimate, a fair margin still remained for sport. The last few weeks had witnessed the enforced abdication of winter, consequently every one was on the *qui vive*. With a pair of field-glasses the Creole busily scanned the snow-patched mountains, whilst the men imagined bears and "queer sorts of animals" in every rock and tuft of scrub. Bear trails, it is true, were distinctly visible on the snow, but it was not until just as breakfast was finished that game was credibly reported in sight. Instantly we rushed on deck, and a herd of four reindeer became the focus of half a dozen glasses. "Fritz, Saïd, Satan, Paul, Boots, Rifles, Cartridges, etc.! Call the gig away, Fife!"

In five minutes H—— and I were being rowed ashore. Meanwhile, the reindeer had strayed away over the brow of a hill and were lost to view. We separated. H—— took Mike, and good-naturedly, as usual, sent Wasili with me. It was fearful walking; the steep hills were covered with

knee-deep moss and patches of leafless bush, amidst the roots of which lay heaps of unthawed snow. We soon struck the tracks, but issuing from some bush rather incautiously, the reindeer we were following caught sight of us at three hundred yards' distance before we had discovered them, and made off at a gentle trot. The extraordinary manner in which the winter coat of the reindeer assimilates itself with broken patches of moss and snow renders it extremely difficult to distinguish them unless moving, even at a comparatively short distance. Even the practised eye of the Creole was sometimes, as in this instance, at fault.

“No good, Wasili, eh?”

“No gōōt,” echoed taciturn Nimrod, mournfully. He took anything of this sort so much to heart that his already solemn visage became filled with touching melancholy. “No gōōt,” he murmured sadly; and waving his leg-of-mutton paw with a gentle gesture of resignation, we followed in the direction the deer had taken. Then,

climbing a high point, we halted to mark them down and give them time to recover their alarm.

The amount we contrived mutually to explain, with the aid of a few signs and the simple words "good" or "no good," became with a little practice remarkable. The only difficulty lay in Wasili's confounded politeness. I had only to point in a direction and inquire whether it was "good" for him to answer promptly and solemnly "Ja gōōt," shoulder his rifle, and march that way at once, although he knew the very opposite course was the best to pursue in quest of game.

Wasili had laid aside my glasses, with which he had been having what he called "chorroschenco smotrick" (*Anglicè*, I take it, "a good look round"), and was rolling himself a cigarette. Lying on the soft couch of moss, I did the same. It was a lovely day; that summer's day in a winter's setting which is rare, but always charming. The genial rays of the sun shone down upon us doubly warm and

doubly welcome by reason of their late rarity, and for those few delightfully idle moments I revelled in the grand scenery. What possessed Wasili's thoughts, I know not; he looked infinitely melancholy, as indeed he always does. Perhaps, though less poetically, he was wondering, like the old king released from durance vile by Goldmar—

“O Sonn', o ihr Berge drüben
O Feld und o grüner Wald!
Wie seid ihr so jung geblieben
Und ich bin worden so alt;”

for Wasili must be five and forty if a day, and, for a Creole, that is the “sear and yellow.” From the moorland hillsides came wafted up on the noontide breeze, a kind of reek of the peat or recollection of the heather—perhaps more in fancy than reality. Ever and anon the dreamy and perfect stillness was broken by the musical calling of an old cock ptarmigan, or the sullen thunder of falling snow, loosened by the heat, up in the hills there, in some unknown valley. White gulls sailed be

twixt us and the blue bay, whose waters far away down below trembled and quivered in a flood of golden sunlight, and stretched beyond ken out to sea, lost on the hazy horizon.

"Elena! elena!"* exclaimed Wasili at length, pointing to two tiny grey specks slowly crossing a dark bit of ground, how far off I should be sorry to guess. However, they could not proceed much farther, as they were near the extremity of a tongue of land reaching out into the bay. A long scramble brought us down to the shore, along which we walked until nearly opposite the spot where the reindeer had been seen. We then struck inland and soon discovered them. One was lying down, the other standing. The ground was favourable for stalking, and at seventy-five yards I fired at the one standing. By the welcome thud of the bullet, I knew he was bagged, although he ran for a short distance as though uninjured. The other started up and immediately placed some

* Reindeer.

bushes between us, but as he made a circuit between me and the shore, I ran across to cut him off, and at sixty yards dropped him as he crossed me with a bullet behind the shoulder, greatly to the Creole's delight. We galloped and left them. On the way back we fell in with H——, who had bagged another reindeer and seen a couple of wolves. The same evening the steam launch was sent to collect the game, which was fortunately all close to the shore. The venison was in splendid condition, and was declared by all of us to be the best we had ever tasted. As we were getting short of fresh meat, it proved a welcome addition to the ship's larder.

Drizzling rain and mist succeeded our one fine day, a fine day, as we subsequently learnt, being a kind of meteorological jewel. Were it not for this drawback, this hopeless succession of wet days, hunting in Alaska would bear the palm from most countries. Elsewhere there may be a greater variety of game, and undoubtedly the walking could hardly be worse, but a few days on these

hills instils such vigour and racy energy into a man, as he has probably never before experienced. The day seems not long enough to tire in, and the heavy walking becomes a mere nothing. Without any particular predilection in favour of high latitudes, I must still say that for perfect health I have yet found no place like Alaska. With H—— it was the same; on the way up he was so thoroughly prostrated and shaken by a hacking cough, that both S—— and I earnestly begged him to change the yacht's course and go south to a warm climate. He, however, refused to do so, and this air, notwithstanding the rough weather, effected in him the most complete and sudden cure—almost, I may say, transformation—that I have ever seen. The next day's hunting was unsuccessful. H——, however, who went out with the seine, made a fine haul of sea-trout that were delicious eating.

Chignick Bay comprises a large extent of water, and contains three separate harbours. The yacht was anchored in one; the second

was small, shallow, and unimportant; the third (by far the largest) penetrated some miles inland, and received a river flowing from a chain of three inland lakes connected one with another. By the Creole's advice we now prepared for an excursion into the first of these lakes. The party consisted of ourselves, Mike, Fritz, Saïd, the Creole, and three men to manage the steam launch and cutter. We left the yacht at eleven, taking with us two tents and provisions for a week.

At the entrance of the third harbour we came upon large flocks of wild-fowl, amongst which were a great number of the handsome parrot-billed and harlequin ducks. Steaming slowly ahead, we had half an hour's regular battue, as, with musical whirring of wings, they rose on either side or circled round us; then, resuming our journey, we reached the head of the bay, and passed up about a mile and a half of rapid, rock-studded river into the first lake. During the last half-mile we put up two pairs of wild swans, and chased a seal that

kept ahead of us until we lost it in the lake. This lake is not named in the charts, and although frequented occasionally by native hunters, hitherto but few white men (at any rate since Russian evacuation of the territory) have visited it. It is surrounded by lofty hills, which in places descend sheer down into the water. There was less snow here than at any spot we had yet seen.

We had covered about half the length of the lake, when Fife the bo'sun exclaimed—

“There's a bear, Sir T——.”

Wasili had made the same discovery, and was pointing out to us, high upon the brow of a hill, a brown spot moving amongst some scanty bush. For the last two hours it had been raining heavily, and as the delay now necessary would bring evening upon us, it was determined to land and camp at once. The wind was off shore, so Wasili and I started to stalk the bear up the bush-covered face of the hill. We should most probably have succeeded in getting a shot at him,

had not nearly all the sailors and servants, animated by a doubtless commendable love of sport, followed in our track. The bear stood it for some time; then he concluded to change quarters, and the way he pranced up that hillside was a sight for sprint runners. S—— had an inflamed eye, and H—— was still too much of an invalid to attempt to scale such a hill; they had both, therefore, remained behind. Subsequently, as we returned to camp after a long tramp, we struck upon the bear's hurried tracks crossing a patch of snow, over a mile and a half from the spot where we had seen him. We reached the tents wet through, but H—— had hot grog and dinner waiting.

Morning broke cold and foggy; it was still blowing hard, and snow was falling. It was useless to attempt to hunt, so no one turned out early. As the day wore on the sun came out brightly, and striking tents we moved to the head of the lake, where a small bay offered a sheltered and convenient locality for camping. During

the afternoon we lounged about on the sandy shore and smoked an indefinite number of pipes. It was scandalously lazy, but exceedingly pleasant, for the day had turned out lovely. Towards evening (which as it is not dark until past ten o'clock, gives ample time for a fair walk) H—— and S—— crossed the lake to shoot ducks, whilst Wasili and I went inland. We were unsuccessful; they shot seven couple of ducks, and saw several wild swans and a beaver dam.

At three o'clock next morning, I left the others in the blankets and turned out. In the dim light of early dawn the gaunt brown hills, snow-capped, and the wild treeless scenery, showed with softer outline and a gentler aspect than in the glare of day. On the shores of the lake, whose mirrored surface was unvexed by a single ripple, was the still smouldering fire of yesterday, with its little pillar of blue smoke. By it Saïd was preparing some cocoa. Presently the Creole issued from the men's tents with his rifle, took his

cocoa with a wry face as if it was Gregory's powder, and in a few minutes off we went. What a glorious morning it was! The world seemed young and glowing with stimulating freshness. A light hoar frost silvered the mosses, and here and there, clinging to the deeper ravines and wrapping the higher mountain tops, remained some yet undissipated traces of mist. Over hill and dale, through ravine and bush, we tramped for mile after mile. Fresh tracks were round us everywhere—the reindeer's hoof-marks, trail of wolf, dainty fox spoor, and the great cushioned footprint of the bear, armed with significant impression of mighty claws. Some were but a few hours old. Still we saw no game. The fiery glow of sunrise was already pouring over the hills to our right, its dappled rosy reflections in the pearly skies were growing deeper and more rich, when the Creole ejaculated—

“Elena!”

More than a mile off in a direct line were four reindeer, on the far side of the river that flowed beneath us and connected the

first and second lakes. To reach them unless they crossed was out of the question, for the river was over a hundred yards wide and fairly deep. Even had we crossed there was nothing but a bare plain to stalk them on. We sat down to rest and watch them. One by one they plunged in, and for a few minutes revelled in their morning bath. In the still rarified atmosphere we could hear distinctly, even at this distance, the sound of their splashing. Anon they went off at a trot.

"No gōōt," said Wasili sorrowfully, as we proceeded, climbing higher and higher until over the plains beyond us in the far distance the blue horizon of the Behring Sea was distinguishable with glasses.

The hills here trended to the right, and we followed their direction for some distance. At length the Creole's keen eye discovered another herd of reindeer amidst the moss on the plains below. They were a long way off, and eventually we found it impossible to get within three hundred yards of them, as the ground was guiltless of the lightest

stick of cover. Being but an indifferent shot with a rifle, I knew it was not the slightest use firing at this distance, and therefore attempted to emulate the cunning of one of Mayne Reid's wily Indians or crafty backwoodsmen by worming my way towards them through the ruts in the moss. Need I relate with what success? In a few minutes the reindeer were to be seen, still going rapidly, on the shoulder of the highest mountain in the neighbourhood. Wasili, with a grin, said it was "no gōōt." We paused for a while and divided half a biscuit.

"Well, which way shall we go now? Good, eh?" and I pointed north.

"Gōōt," said the Creole, left foot forward and quick march.

"Hold hard; not so quick. Good, eh?" and I pointed south.

"Gōōt," he replied, right-about facing and making off in that direction with equal alacrity. You couldn't argue with this man. His passive acquiescence would kill a woman with vexation in a fortnight.

Wending our way homewards by a circuitous route, we discovered yet another herd of four reindeer. I made sure at one time of bagging at least one of these. They were feeding directly towards some low scrub, in the most advanced outpost of which I contrived to establish myself without exciting the slightest suspicion. Very indolently they fed on in a direct line towards me. I lay down in a nice soft bog of red mud and moss to wait patiently, whilst what remained dry about me after crossing sundry streams and stalking, became speedily soaked. After a while I ventured to peer over the scrub, and was disgusted to find that the buck was lying down. In the course of the next hour two of the does followed suit. They were about two hundred and fifty yards' distance from me. Could any animals behave in a more disgustingly ill-conditioned manner? It was the sort of thing a costermonger's donkey would do if he was being stalked. From my wet ambush I launched anathemas deep and original at that lordly buck and the lights of his harem. I was wet through;

lying there with nothing to do, I had discovered a most imperious appetite ; and the possibility recurred to me with mocking persistency that if I did wait till they moved, it might, after all, be in the opposite direction. After another half hour of it, therefore, I cut some brushwood, and, adopting this as a screen, moved like Birnam Wood on Dunsinane. Had it not been for the truly feminine doe that would neither lie down nor move on, I believe I should have got a fair shot. However, before long my bush, of course, excited her confounded curiosity. Still it was not till I was within a hundred and fifty yards that with an idiotic flirt and a caper she skipped off. The others sprang up and immediately followed her example, a brace of bullets that I sent after them taking no effect.

After this last ineffectual effort we turned our steps towards camp, following the banks of the river. On the way I noticed in some sand the prints of mocassins, and Wasili picked up a scrap of paper that had evidently served as a gun-wad. These proved the

Creole's already expressed opinion, that native hunters had lately traversed the country, to be correct. We reached camp soon after four in the afternoon. H—— had been out all the morning, but had seen nothing. S—— still had an inflamed eye which prevented his shooting. H—— was just starting across the lake again in quest of ducks, and S—— accompanied him for the walk. After a bath, breakfast, and a pipe, I took the rifle and struck across country in the direction of our old camp. The Creole pleaded a game leg—more laziness, I fancy, than anything—so I went alone, and returned between nine and ten without having seen anything but a porcupine, which I killed with my knife. He was first-rate eating.

During my absence H——'s servant, Fritz, who had been out for a walk with Mike, returned triumphant with the skin of a bear he had killed only a mile from camp, and on ground we had passed over in the morning. Fritz, by the way, is a very good shot with a rifle, and, what is more important

still is proverbially lucky in seeing game. Though small, the skin was the handsomest I have ever seen. This is the most favourable period in the year for obtaining bears' skins. They are now in perfect condition. Later on, the coats are shed and become worn and rubbed. H—— again had good sport with the ducks. By some merciful dispensation we were blessed with another fine day. After an unsuccessful walk we breakfasted at nine, then, striking camp, steamed slowly down the lake, and entered a large bay that it formed about half-way up on the left-hand side. Here we landed for a walk, but only saw one reindeer, and that not until he had carefully examined us.

In all directions the country was traversed by regular beaten paths, some of which were sunk eight or ten inches in the ground. These, the Creole affirmed, were worn by the frequent passage to and fro of bears, and from the cropped blades of young grass here and there they had evidently been lately used. Taking into consideration the number of these trails, and the immense amount of

wear it must have taken to bring them to their present condition, it seemed as if we had struck upon the original home of bears—their Garden of Eden. However, the Creole said he knew of a still better place; so, although somewhat reluctantly, we deferred to his judgment, and quitting the lake altogether, returned to the bay.

Eventually, as it was raining and blowing heavily, and growing late, we had to pitch camp on the nearest ground, which happened to be very exposed and unsuitable. Whilst the men were setting up the tent, and the servants with difficulty lighting a fire, three reindeer, feeding, came into sight on a hill about a quarter of a mile off. H—— and the Creole went after them, whilst we watched their proceedings from camp. After some careful circumnavigation they got within eighty yards, and H—— bowled over a fine buck.

A wet night ensued, and a dismal morning greeted us. Wasili shook his stolid figure-head with portentous gravity, as he turned out and looked round a little before three

o'clock. H—— had determined to strike camp at nine, and seek a more sheltered position on the opposite side of the bay. We were unable, therefore, to extend our walk to any great distance.

Just as we were on the point of turning back the Creole's keen eye fixed on three reindeer. With stately march, halting now and then to gaze around or crop the heavy growth of moss, they approached us over the wet misty moorlands. It was a picturesque sight. Between us lay the ford of a mountain stream, for which they were making. We established ourselves, lying down in some thin scrub to wait for them. Slowly they descended the little rugged track, and for a while stood drinking at intervals in the stream; then, ascending our side of the valley, utterly unconscious of their danger, drew near our hiding-place. Nearer and nearer, within sixty, fifty, forty yards, came the buck, and then he halted. In another fraction of a second he would have been off. I fired, and the ball penetrated his chest. He reared half turning,

sprang a few paces forwards, and fell dead. The spot where the reindeer lay, though six miles from camp, was not far distant from the shore; we galloped and left it there, intending to send for it with the steam launch.

Within ten minutes after reaching camp, the rain came down in torrents, and wind and sea rose to such an extent that it was impossible to venture out in the boats. This continued without intermission the whole of the day and night. To light a fire was out of the question; the spot was too exposed. Our tent—one of Edginton's, and an old one too—did its work nobly, and, notwithstanding the force of the rain, allowed not a drop of water to penetrate. However, it made no difference to us in the long run, for the ground around it soon became thoroughly soaked, and as no trench had been cut we reaped the consequences. As for the men, they had pitched their tent in a hollow to escape the wind, and consequently were lying in a pool of water. Wasili cheered us by saying that weather

THE FISH MARKET AT TACOMA

of the land usually ~~is~~ ~~there~~ it is
left.

Early in the following morning the wind
blew very much, and we made at 8 o'clock
to reach the place. It is not in the
company of boats across the bay, and keep
very close of the opposite side. Conse-
quently the dead remainder had to be
abandoned to the wolves. Within five
minutes of entering the boats every one was
comfortably wet through. Mackintoshes in
such wind, rain, and bucketfuls of spray
proved a delusion, for the water got up the
arms and down the back, ran inside the
buttoned front, and seemed to exult in its
ingenuity. Nearing the mouth of the bay,
where broad sand-banks leave but a narrow
channel, the tow rope broke, and as the sea
was too heavy for the launch to turn back,
we in the cutter were left adrift. With the
wind dead ahead, and no room to tack, it
was useless to put up the sail. An attempt
to row against the incoming tide, which
ran like a mill-race, proved equally imprac-
ticable. We were therefore obliged to drop

back, and wait five or six hours until the tide turned.

A sheltered spot was discovered under the lee of a rock, and a fire built, by the aid of which hot grog and tea were soon served out. This, with an unlimited supply of tobacco, a lot of yarning, and a little revolver practice, in which Mike, who is an old Virginia City man of early days, and was for years a miner, proved that his hand had not lost his cunning, caused the time to slip away with astonishing rapidity.

When the tide turned the wind dropped, and pulling and sailing we were enabled to reach the yacht by half-past ten, none the worse for the day's work.

A couple of days afterwards S—— and I, with Saïd, the Creole, and three men, left the yacht in the cutter and launch for the opposite side of the bay, whither we had not yet been. H—— had a touch of his old enemy, rheumatism, and arranged to follow us next day if the weather was fine. We landed late in the afternoon, near a barab-bora built by the Creole when he visited

the place five years before. Leaving the men to pitch the tents, S—— and I went for a long walk with Wasili, but saw only one reindeer, and that not until he had discovered us.

Next morning we saw nothing at all, and were driven back, as heavy wind and rain prevailed, and mist at the same time obscured the country to such an extent that it was impossible to see more than forty or fifty yards' distance. The rain and wind rapidly increased, and continued without a moment's cessation throughout the day and night.

Early next morning, when I awoke, it was blowing a splendid gale, and our tent-pegs, which had repeatedly loosened in the soaked ground, drew in several places. The tent seemed doomed to come down. Above the turmoil of the elements, as we clung to the tent-poles, I could hear Tip conjugating the verb "to d——n," and solemnly cursing (with an amount of quaintness and originality that would have done credit to a Turk, and which nearly

killed me with laughter) the tent and the poles, the pegs and the ropes, the rain, wind, and sea, Alaska, and the northern hemisphere generally, his own hard fate in particular, and me for persuading him to come on this expedition. In the midst of it all came Saïd to say—

“Monsieur, le stim launch est parti pour la Perse.”

“Comment?”

“Le stim launch est parti, ou fondu—on ne sait pas quoi.”

Everything was wet through, so we shifted quarters into the barabbora, which the men had cleared out, and then followed them in search of the launch. She had been anchored some little distance from the shore, but during the night had chafed and cut her cable and gone adrift. By truly marvellous good fortune she escaped the rocks, and ran aground on the only little smooth patch in the neighbourhood. Had she been piloted by guardian angels it could not have been better managed. It was a work of considerable labour to get her up

and the other was this was, however, eventually recovered and it was then discovered that she had only lost her shoe and sustained a slight injury to her ankle.

But the wind continued with unabated violence all day. Towards evening it cleared a little and Jack and I went for a tramp over the hills. In crossing a mountain stream swollen by the last thirty-six hours' rain I narrowly escaped being swept away, but a lucky jump to a rough bush saved me, at any rate for the moment. We saw no signs of game. It rained and blew vigorously all night. The packing in the tarabborra was somewhat closer, if possible, than on the similar occasion when we were weather-bound at Kodias; however, with a large wood fire and such atmosphere as one might expect to enjoy in a kitchen chimney, we soon became comfortably smoke-dried. In the morning it cleared, although the wind did not drop, and we got the launch on drift-pine tree rollers, intending to run her down at low tide and float her off; but

throughout the day the tide did not ebb two feet.

As we were running short of fresh meat, I strolled off with the little twelve-bore Grant and killed three brace of ptarmigan. In certain districts the hills and moorlands here are alive with these birds. Frequently, had not the search for larger game occupied us, a couple of guns could have killed thirty or forty brace a day with ease, and this without dogs. As it was, it was only when we wanted a change of food that we killed them, or when occasionally, for the pleasure of handling the twelve-bore after the heavy rifle, I used to let the Creole carry it for me and shoot a few birds on the way back to camp.

An attempt to launch the heavy steam launch with the strength at our command would, considering the heavy sea that was breaking on the shore, have been a risky matter. S——, therefore, started for the yacht in the cutter to send back more men. I was well lodged—indeed, I may say exceedingly comfortable—in the barabbora,

and being unwilling to lose an opportunity of making sport, remained where I was, reasoning as it seemed likely at the time, or as my fate clear in time through the night. Vain hopes! About half-past ten a heavy fog closed in us, and we returned to camp.

Next morning we were out early, but saw nothing. At mid-day the carpenter and nine men arrived; the launch was got afloat, and after a wet trip across the bay we reached the yacht. After a couple more days in the bay, during which time we shot nothing but a few brace of ptarmigan, as the weather showed no signs of marked improvement, H—— gave the word to start for Ungar, and we left with a tolerably correct impression of what the early days of the Deluge must have resembled.

CHAPTER XIV.

PORT MÖLLER.

AT Ungar we were to have dropped Wasili, but the trading schooner he expected to catch there has already left, so he continues the trip with us to Ounalaska, between which port and Kodiak communication is more frequent. Wasili smiles benignly and says, "Gōōt" or "No gōōt," whichever is suggested to him.

We had seen the last of trees at Kodiak; in Chignick Bay there was nothing but bush; here the hills are guiltless even of that, and, but for the young grass (the colour of which is quite a treat to us), would be bleak and bare.

The barabboras that for the most part compose the village present a curious sight.

They are built and roofed of turf, and the warmth of the fire inside has forced on their exteriors luxuriant crops of grass, far in advance of the surrounding vegetation.

The men of the village are all away sea-otter hunting. This unfortunate animal, cursed as it is with the handsomest of all furs, knows no moment's peace. It is hunted almost without intermission throughout the year, and dogs, females, and pups are killed indiscriminately. Many assured us that their numbers were not decreasing, but they based this assumption on the fact that the annual number of skins obtained showed no signs of diminution. Taking into consideration the increasing avidity with which it is pursued, the multiplying numbers of its pursuers, and the extending field of their operations, the average of skins ought really to be considerably augmented. When the Russians held the country sea-otters were protected, and only a fixed number yearly killed. Now the case is different. No animal has ever withstood, much less thriven under, such persistent and systematic per-

secution, and unless it migrates entirely to some less accessible coast the sea-otter will be exterminated. At present it is growing more shy, so that whereas formerly it was hunted near land, the natives now have to seek it twenty or thirty miles out at sea. At one time it was found as far south as California.

From Ungar we proceeded to Port Möller, the weather continuing delightful, as it had been ever since we left Chignick Bay.

In the midst of breakfast one morning Paul, in a great state of excitement, entered the saloon.

"Please, Sir T——, there's millions of birds all round the ship for miles and miles—all the birds in the world, I think."

We finished breakfast, and then went on deck. Certainly the sight was most extraordinary. The sea was calm as a mirror. As far as the sight could reach in every direction its surface was covered by myriads of ducks. Nor did they seem in the least degree frightened by the yacht's appearance, merely scuttling away on either side from

under the bows with a cry like that of a cat, as we steamed at half-speed through them. Seated on the water like frigates amidst a fleet of canoes were a few albatrosses. H—— committed an albatrocity and shot a couple of them, which were picked up by the dingey.

“ And he had done a hellish thing,
And it would work us woe.
Ah! wretch, we say, the bird to slay
That made the breeze to blow.”

At Port Möller we found a small schooner engaged in walrus hunting. The captain came on board, and very civilly assisted our people in finding good anchorage. He said they had shot three bears, and had been all round the bay in search of walrus tusks, of which they had found twenty pairs. We had hoped to find this place undisturbed. It was somewhat disgusting, therefore, to discover their old fires and tracks all over the country.

Soon after breakfast we all went ashore in the gig, preceded by the cutter with the seine. The first haul produced, amongst a

few other fish, a fine chowichee salmon (*Salmo orientalis*), the king of salmon and, as a delicacy, of all fish. It was as square as a box, as handsome as a picture, and just turned the scales at thirty pounds. The next haul brought three fish, twenty-five, twenty-three and a half, and fifteen pounds respectively, all of the same species and in equally fine condition.

I left H—— and S—— with the net, and went off on a long reconnaissance with the Creole to gain some idea as to the lie of the land. We returned late in the evening without having seen any game, although sufficient fresh tracks were visible in all directions to prove that bears, until within the last day or so, had been very numerous here. Reindeer must also have frequented these hills in great numbers at one time. In traversing the country we saw scores of magnificent antlers that had been shed or broken off. They are in the habit of migrating in vast herds from one district to another, and thus it seldom occurs that they are found in large numbers on the same ground for two consecutive seasons.

To me it is extraordinary that the inhabitants of Alaska have never tamed and used the reindeer for domestic purposes. Lack of fresh meat is the cause of frequent complaint, and cattle, owing to the long winters and the attention they require, will always be more or less costly and scarce. The natives are, however, cursed with intolerable indolence, and the energies of the whites are so completely engrossed in fur trading that they are content to grumble, and there let the matter rest.

The seine, after we left, took six more salmon, the largest of which was twenty-seven pounds and a half.

We had not tried night-hunting, and a professed bear-hunter never dreams of looking for them here by day after the season has once fairly commenced. S—— and I agreed, therefore, the following evening to go in opposite directions, and remain out until morning. We landed in different parts of the bay about five o'clock. H——'s servant, Fritz, accompanied S——, the Creole following my fortunes. Mist and

drizzling rain prevailed throughout the night. We walked until the dark hours (between half-past eleven and two) obliged us to rest, and during this time we watched the beach, whither both bears and wolves resort at night-time in search of food. At half-past seven we met the boat, and returned to the yacht without having seen a head of game of any description.

S—— returned soon afterwards jubilant. They had killed one bear and seen another. The first they discovered in the evening upon the beach, feeding on ulikon, or candle-fish, thrown up by the waves. So engrossed was he in his occupation that, favoured by the grass-grown bank behind him, they were able to creep up and overlook him at about fifteen or twenty yards' distance. S—— wounded him, but he managed to get off, and it took three more bullets to finish him. They saw the second bear in the morning, but whether he scented the dead carcase of his fellow or caught sight of them remained uncertain. At any rate, as S—— said, "suddenly he shied right

across the beach, and then bolted like a two-year-old with the bit in his mouth. We watched him for four miles, and he was still going grandly, taking everything in his stride."

It was a lovely day. H—— went off for a cruise in the steam launch, to explore the bay. In the evening I took one of the men and, crossing to the opposite side of the bay, spent the night out. We passed over a lot of splendid country, but saw no game, although there were numerous bear-tracks along the beach. Curiously enough, on this side of the bay ptarmigan were very plentiful, but not a single reindeer's antler was to be seen; whereas on the other shore the case was exactly reversed. Probably some slight difference in the vegetation would account for this. During the day a dead walrus floated into the bay on the tide. H—— went off in the steam launch to secure it, and whilst doing so fell in with seven more. The schooner we had met on our arrival had probably fallen in with a herd further up the coast and killed them.

In the evening I went out again for the night, accompanied by Mike. The last night had been clear as day and soft as summer; this, at the commencement, was even more enjoyable. However, we did not over-exert ourselves; I had not slept lately, and was consequently willing to take matters easily, a proposal that Mike gladly seconded. At length, having seen nothing, we sat down to watch the beach, and he choose himself an exceedingly snug spot, sheltered entirely from the breeze. When, about three o'clock, I aroused him, he awoke with a severe cold and an acute touch of rheumatism. The wind had risen and veered round entirely, so that he obtained the full benefit of it. Moreover, he had started overnight in a remarkably picturesque but useless pair of thin embroidered mocassins, which in a few minutes had become saturated with water. His feet were consequently perished.

It took three quarters of an hour's hard swearing to warm him. I expected each moment to see a sulphurous nimbus en-

velop his brow, and a lambent flame play around him. However, nothing of the sort appeared; so he must be a wonderful non-conductor, or perhaps it was the damp air saved him. He concluded by saying that "any one was welcome to his share of the bears of Alaska, and the next time he heard bear hunting in this country called sport, he should divide the statement amongst the company present, and take his share in disbelieving it." Altogether Mike's wrath was amusing.

Unfortunately the morning was obscured by dense fog, and hunting was out of the question. After waiting, therefore, until nearly six for it to clear off, we returned along the shore to meet the boat. During the walk I saw the most miraculous draught of fish that I ever witnessed. Shoals of ulikon had come into the bay, and for over a mile along the beach, each wave as it broke turned over and threw up struggling myriads of small fish. So numerous were they that the waves seemed more like waves of fish than of water. Without

wetting my feet, I gathered a few double handfuls, and filled my cartridge bag with enough for breakfast. Had it been necessary, an unlimited number of barrels might have been filled with equal facility. These fish are so fat that when dried, if one end be applied to fire, they burn freely and give forth an excellent light. Hence their ordinary name of candle-fish. In delicacy of flavour they far surpass the smelt, which, however, they somewhat resemble both in taste and appearance.

Soon after we returned, H—— took the Creole and Edlefsen, and started in the steam launch on a voyage of exploration in search of a good camping ground, for Port Möller had not quite answered our expectations.

In the afternoon I went out in the cutter on a sort of miscellaneous hunt, with two rods and spoon baits over the stern, and a gun and rifle in the boat. Mike accompanied me. He was sceptical about the possibility of taking one of these salmon with a rod. Such a thing had never

a fish of fifteen pounds, was the gamest of the lot. Five times he leaped from the water, and time after time, when I thought I had him settled, he ran out line again as if it was his first rush. However, with strong tackle and a vigorous application of the "butt," he was eventually brought to reason. The fourth just turned the scale at nineteen pounds; he also fought well, and took some time to kill. Mike, in a state of great excitement, gaffed them all in grand style. He forgot the penalty he had voluntarily incurred, until the French cook, who had heard him and was on the look-out for his return, met him as he came on deck with—

"Hey, Monsieur Mike, weech feesh shall I have ze honour to cook upon your estomac?"

H—— did not return until after twelve o'clock. He had found another bay not marked in the chart, and had seen in one place eleven bears, some of them enormous. He and the Creole had killed a terrific brute. Two men proved insufficient to bring the

THE BEAR AND THE CREOLE

On the morning after our arrival, we were started early, but saw nothing. In the afternoon H— took the Creole and went for a cruise along the shore in the steam launch. At some distance from camp Wasili saw a bear lying down on the hillside. They landed, and stalking it carefully,

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* I regret that the only measurement taken of this bear was the circumference of the right fore-arm. This, after the skin was removed, measured twenty-nine inches.

got within thirty yards before Bruin became aware of their presence. Then he rose and stood for a second stupidly staring at H——, who dropped him stone dead with an explosive bullet from one of our Westley-Richards 500-bores. The bullet penetrated the centre of the forehead and shattered the skull. They returned with the skin, a remarkably handsome one, in perfect condition.

Heavy fog obliged us to remain in camp that evening. I had been out so frequently without seeing a head of game, that with the superstition of his race the Creole began to look upon me as under an unlucky charm. "I was fighting against God," he said. "We had been out day after day and not even seen anything. I was unlucky, and might walk for another three months without seeing anything. H——, on the other hand, had a charm for seeing bears. Twice only had he been out with him, and on each occasion they had killed a bear. In short, he was convinced that it was no use for me to go out at all, as God did not mean me to kill His bears;" and he manifested

a marked disinclination to accompany me any further. His faith in this belief was, I imagine, strengthened by the fact that I was apt to walk rather more than he appreciated. Wasili had evidently a time-honoured custom of discussing a pipe or two or three cigarettes on the top of every hill he surmounted. As I, to avoid temptation, never carried tobacco, and very rarely had recourse to his pouch and papers, we were opposed on this most important point.

The following morning, therefore, I left him in camp, and started before three o'clock with Fritz, determined, as it was our last chance but one, to make a long day of it. When a morning is fine in Alaska, it is difficult to match. Little can surpass the crystal clearness and rich colour in all the distances of its highland scenery, or the crisp exhilarating freshness of the morning air. With a sense of vigorous health you start away over the piled mosses, devoid of all care, revelling in the untrammelled freedom of outdoor life, and drinking in the wild beauty of everything

around you. There are rich brown hills, shot with every tone from yellow to ruddy crimson, and in their furrows and rifts is a tinge of brilliant green borrowed from the new-born grass. There are purple monarchs, snow-mantled, in the distance, and farther still, wrapped in clouds like some mysterious magician amongst mountains, looms upwards the hoary summit of a giant volcano. There is blue in the bay, specked with white birds, and blue in the sky above, where the golden eagle or his white-headed pirate cousin circles and sails majestically soaring. But not a tree breaks the lone expanse of colour—not even Heine's lonely pine tree on bleak height, dreaming, beneath ice and snow, of the sorrow-bowed palm alone on the glowing precipice in the far-off land of the sun. Bush there is in plenty, but no trees, nor do you miss them. Give me fine weather and Alaska to hunt in, and I will not envy you a paradise with all its summer palaces and houris. Musically the tiny waves of a calm sea broke and murmured along the deserted shore; music-

ally the cry of the startled ptarmigan sounded on the moorland as the bronze-and-white bird, his summer plumage yet uncompleted, sped away over the purple knolls and hillocks at our approach. "Green-kirtled spring" had come at last—

"And each flower and herb on earth's dark breast
Rose from the dreams of its wintry rest."

Wild flowers enamelled all the country side;
at every step we trampled—

"Over the violets there that lie
In myriad types of the human eye,"

For the hills were covered with them. A cross fox (half silver, half red) sprang up, and at fifty yards turned suspiciously to examine us. I was sorry afterwards that I did not avail myself of the chance thus offered, but between scruples about committing vulpecide and a desire not to disturb the country by firing at such small game, Reynard escaped scot-free.

For the next four or five miles we saw nothing; then, whilst crossing a plain, three reindeer couchant got up about three hundred yards ahead of us. After a good

deal of scrutiny and indecision, approaching, retiring, halting, and returning, etc.—for possibly we were the first men they had ever seen—they decided against us, and made for a valley some distance off. When they were out of sight we followed, but subsequently, finding that they were still moving, gave up the chase.

Soon after this I discovered a bear, some way up on a hillside. Another and another came in sight, issuing from a patch of bush. It was a fine she bear, with a couple of well-grown cubs (judged afterwards by the Creole to be) a year and ten months or two years old. Slowly feeding, they advanced down the hillside, and as in doing so they approached more favourable ground for stalking, we waited and watched them. From time to time the old lady gave vent to a cry which was something between a snarl and the lowing of a cow. At length they halted, and the cubs lay down. We stalked up to them, and, favoured by a furrow in the hill, got within forty yards. The old bear was still standing. I fired.

The first cartridge missed fire, but the second took effect behind the left shoulder—a little too far back, and the bullet (a .500 Westley-Richard's explosive) smashing up, created fearful havoc. A small piece of it penetrated the heart, whilst the liver and other parts were completely annihilated. With a growl, she turned, and seizing one of her cubs, shook it severely; but almost immediately she staggered a few yards away, stood for a second still, and then rolled over. Bears have no "show" against these express rifles. Fritz, just before she dropped, put a bullet into the lower part of the neck, which passed out, grazing the shoulder-blade. The cubs allowed themselves to be shot down like sheep.

After this, although we walked far, the only game we saw was a large grey wolf, who, seated on a hillside, amused himself by baying "all the time." Needless to say, he objected to anything nearer than a barking acquaintance. As the day wore on, the weather clouded over, and wind, heavy mist, and rain set in. On our return, we saw the

launch driven back, having failed in an attempt to cross the bay with H—— and Wasili, who were bent on repeating their yesterday's performance.

Soon after we had left in the morning, a grand old bear had strolled down from the hills to within two or three hundred yards of the camp. H—— had gone after it. Unfortunately the man who carried his rifle lagged somewhat behind, and he came suddenly upon the bear—which was moving in some bush—without other weapon than one boot that he had just put on when the bear first appeared. Fortunately for him the brute bolted, as they most frequently will unless wounded. In the evening the weather was too foul to hunt. At four next morning I went with some men in the launch to bring away my skins of the previous day, together with the carcasses of the cubs. Later on in the season, when the bears have fed plentifully on fish,* their

* When once the salmon begin to ascend the rivers, the bears frequent the banks, and entering the water scoop the fish out on to the banks with their paws. So numerous are the salmon that this is not difficult.

flesh has a rank, unpleasant flavour, but at this early stage in the year it is by no means bad, and is at any rate preferable to preserved meat. The paws, especially of a young bear, are by no means to be despised.

We were just enabled to reach camp before a regular sample of Alaska weather came on. As it partially cleared in the afternoon, H—— went for a cruise in the launch, but it took them so long to cross the bay that they had only time to land and procure a few gulls' eggs before they were forced to return—wet through, of course. Gulls' eggs, although a trifle too strongly flavoured to be eaten alone, serve nevertheless very well for cooking purposes. Most of these particular eggs proved to be nearly hatched, and by most people would have been unhesitatingly declared bad. Wasili was troubled by no such dainty scruples. He boiled and ate them with gusto, saying that, so far from considering them bad, he thought they were preferable to fresh eggs, inasmuch as they were more substantial.

Disgusting as it was to remain idle in the

midst of a fine game country, we were nevertheless obliged to, for the evening was too foul and foggy to do anything. We turned in early, therefore, intending to start next morning for the yacht. Our plans were modified by circumstances, and we passed the next day and night in true Chignik Bay style. Towards two o'clock in the morning it cleared slightly, and by four we made a successful attempt to get off.

In the cutter we soon set a double-reefed lugsail, and casting loose from the launch, which also had a sail up to steady her, we, although carrying the five skins, a quantity of meat, and all the luggage, rapidly left her astern, and ran the distance to the yacht—twenty-one miles—in a heavy sea in one hour and fifty-five minutes. During the trip we got out of our course, and amongst some big curly white-topped breakers on a sand-bank. Matters at one time looked very ticklish indeed; it would have been an appropriate occasion to “take up a collection,” had it occurred to any one. You know that tale, don't you? No? Well,

three Yankees in a canoe were drifting towards some dangerous rapids into which they had been drawn. "Can either of ye say a prayer?" inquired one of them gloomily. "No, they didn't go much on prayers." "Wal, p'r'aps one of ye knows a hymn?" "No." "Couldn't whistle the tune of one, maybe?" "No." "Wal, ef neither of ye knows a prayer, and ye can't either of ye sing a hymn, we must do something sacerdotal; so I guess I'd better take up a collection. 'Thar's my dollar." We did not require to take up a collection, for fortunately the cutter—one of H——'s new whaleboats built at San Francisco—was a splendid sea-boat, and with a little luck and a good deal of sea-water we scraped through safely. The launch, steering a better course, avoided the sand-bank, and reached the yacht three quarters of an hour after we did.

In the afternoon the wind dropped, and H—— and I tried spoon-baits in the bay. We got seven good salmon, the smallest twelve, the largest twenty-six and a half

pounds. H—— went out again after dinner with the seine, and in a few hauls they more than half filled the gig with herrings. Next morning we quitted Port Möller, *en route* for St. Paul's, one of the Pryvloff Islands.

CHAPTER XV.

THE SEAL ISLANDS.

THE unusual protraction of winter had proved fatal to our chances of sport during the earlier part of our visit. Under ordinary circumstances our arrival in Alaska would have been well timed; as it was, we were at least a month too early, and during that time killed nothing but a few birds. June was now drawing to a close. Between the 10th and 15th of the following month H—— had promised to be again in San Francisco and join the yacht club in their annual trip to Monterey. Sufficient time just remained, therefore, to visit St. Paul's Island and complete the return voyage. It is from the Pryvloff Islands, whither we now went, that the main supply of sealskins is ob-

tained. A few (and that few, owing to indiscriminate slaughter, annually decreasing) are found in the Magellan Straits and the vicinity of the Falkland Islands; a few are taken about the Kurile Islands; about thirty thousand are yearly captured on the Behring and Copper Islands; the rest, a hundred thousand in number, come from the Pryloff Islands, or seventy to eighty thousand from St. Paul's, and the balance from St. George's.

We reached St. Paul's in the early morning. The island is utterly devoid of trees, destitute even of bush or scrub, and altogether as bare and dismal a spot as ever fell to the lot of man to inhabit.

There are few places on the globe where summer does not exhibit some of those welcome features we are accustomed to associate with its presence. The Pryloff Islands summer seems, however, to have struck entirely off her visiting list. They are banished from the world. Such bond of union as there may be in knowing that the same sun shines on them that shines on

when people is almost banished to their imprisonments: in only a few intervals does a ray of sunlight pierce the heavy canopy of clouds and reach them. At long intervals ships come up out of the sea and break in upon the heavy solitude of the islanders; they pass swiftly again, as it were, into an outer world and are lost behind the curtain of fog which like the fashion of prison walls, surrounds this desolate spot. Here it is, however, that the fur seal takes up his quarters for half the year. To him sunlight and warmth mean death, whilst a climate of continual fog perfects his happiness.

Soon after breakfast we were visited by Colonel Otis (commandant of the island), and later on returned with him on shore. After a visit to the Alaska Company's quarters, where we partook of lunch, the colonel and General Scrivner (commandant of St. George's) took us to see some of the nearest rookeries. I am indebted to the latter gentleman, who has passed much time in observing the seals and noting their habits, for some interesting facts.

Fur seals begin to arrive here about the end of May, and quit about the end of October; the rookeries are not properly filled until the latter end of July or commencement of August; and it is then computed that there are between two and three million seals on the island. Many theories have been started to account for their disappearance during the remainder of the year, but all are more or less hypothetical. One of the most probable conjectures seems to be that they scatter and pass the winter in the open sea. The bulls reach the island a few days in advance of the cows, and take up their quarters on the rocky shores, where they await the arrival of the ladies, and as they appear select, and if necessary fight, for them. It frequently happens that two rival suitors seize upon a cow at the same moment, each attempting to convey her to his own harem, and a struggle ensues, in which the unfortunate object of their affections is fearfully torn and lacerated. forcible abduction of a neighbour's wife is also a by no means uncommon crime. Females

sometimes exhibit a natural preference in favour of certain males, although, as a rule, they are passively indifferent. A harem may consist of from two or three to two or three and twenty cows, and the lords who are the happy possessors of so much young affection are exceedingly jealous in guarding it. The old bulls are very quarrelsome, and are constantly engaged in fighting with one another, an encroachment of a few inches on the space they and their families occupy being sufficient excuse for a fierce encounter.

There is a great disproportion in the relative sizes of the two sexes; bulls when well grown will weigh eight hundred pounds, exceeding by three or four times the size of their partners. The former, when young, appear jet black, and are remarkably handsome; with increasing age their colour changes to a dirty yellow or grey, and the mane becomes more developed. The latter are dark grey, merging into yellowish brown on the breast and belly. Young bachelors of three or four years old are not permitted to approach the rookeries or consort with

the opposite sex ; but towards the close of the season, when the old males leave, they avail themselves of the opportunity thus afforded to enjoy a little female society.

From the time of their arrival until the date of their departure, the old bulls do not enter the water, nor, until the season is well advanced and, the object of their visit being effected, discipline is somewhat relaxed, do they permit the ladies of their harems to do so either. They exist, therefore, without food during the greater part of six months, and consequently it is not to be wondered at that, despite the excellent condition in which they arrive, this fact, coupled with the constant fighting and the anxiety and wear and tear of married life, reduces them almost to skeletons before they depart. It is supposed that they feed on fish, but hitherto nothing has ever been discovered in the stomach of a seal opened at the Pryvloff Islands.

Owing to the difficulty of identifying and distinguishing one from another, it is a slow and uncertain matter to arrive at

just conclusions with regard to their habits and peculiarities. Latterly they have been marked, and it has thus been discovered that they are liable, if in ensuing seasons they again come under notice, to appear at different rookeries, or even at the other island (St. George's).

The rookeries are well worth a visit. In no other part of the world is such a sight to be seen. They cover a large extent of coast. Thousands upon thousands—to be more correct, I should say tens upon tens of thousands of seals lie packed so close together that every available foot of ground is occupied. Fighting and struggling, restless and shifting, bellowing and snarling, or prone and slumbering, these dense crowds of animals present a most extraordinary and interesting spectacle. Family after family, each encircling the lordly and ever-watchful bull, are collected together in countless numbers. The air is filled with their sickly odour, and resounds with their ceaseless cries, until the collective din of a thousand cattle fairs would by comparison with it be a blessed relief.

On the following day, under the guidance of Mr. M'Intyre, we were enabled to witness the mode of killing them. The right of seal killing on these islands has been granted by the United States Government exclusively to the Alaska Fur Trading Company. In their lease the annual "kill" is restricted to one hundred thousand, which are chosen entirely from young bulls between the ages of two and five. The old bulls and females are never disturbed. Seals follow one another like a flock of sheep. A couple of Aleuts, therefore, by getting between them and the sea, experience no difficulty in slowly driving a band of three or four hundred into the interior of the island. To do this successfully the weather must, however, be damp and cold; in anything like heat or sunlight they drop and die by the way very rapidly, and the skins of these seals are worthless. The driving is now generally performed by night, so that the loss incurred is slight. Arrived at the Golgotha, squads of about twenty are separated from the main body, and, with the exception of those re-

jected by the experts as too old or young, are killed with a club about four feet long. One blow usually suffices, for the cranium is remarkably thin.

It is curious to notice with what persistency a youngster that has been driven away will sometimes return, and, scrambling over the dead bodies of his companions, attempt to remain. There he will lie snapping at the clubs that would thrust him away, and snarling defiance, as though scorning to escape. The club men are followed by another gang of Aleuts, who plunge their knives into the seal's heart, rip up the belly, and make an incision round the head, fore and hind flippers. They in turn are succeeded by yet another set, armed with longer and keener blades, which from time to time they touch upon small hones slung round their necks. These complete the work, and with a few rapid strokes remove the skin. There is said to be an Aleut at St. George's who can skin three seals in 2 min. 40 sec.

The skins are now buried for seven days in

heaps of salt, then packed and sent to San Francisco. There they are repacked before being forwarded to London, where they are dressed, shaved, and dyed. Lately an ingenious machine has been invented to facilitate the process of shaving. By its aid the skin is pared away until the roots of the long hairs that form the external covering of the seal are cut. They are then simply brushed off and fall out, while the much-prized fur, which adheres almost to the surface, remains uninjured.

Every precaution is taken on the islands to avoid frightening or in any way disturbing the seals. On this account no dogs or other animals, with the exception of a few horses, etc., are admitted. The sound of a gun is never heard during the breeding season, and the rookeries are rarely approached. During the last few years seals have been captured in the Juan de Fuca Straits, and their pursuit in this direction is rapidly assuming importance. The seals here taken are said to be almost all females, and in most instances to contain young. It is supposed

that they are intercepted on their way to the Pryvloff Islands.

After being skinned the carcasses of the seals are left upon the ground to decompose. This, as they consist chiefly of blubber, they do very rapidly, and without giving rise to any very powerful odour. Trying out oil from the blubber has been attempted, but was found unremunerative. The company pay the Aleuts, who are the native inhabitants of the islands, forty cents for each skin. They also pay a tax of \$2 62½c. to Government on each pelt. Last season, owing probably to the succession of hard winters, the company's sealskins, when sold by auction in London, averaged seventeen dollars apiece. Fifteen dollars is the average price.

It will be seen, therefore, that even after deducting salaries and other expenses, a fine margin remains for profit. From the foregoing estimates, which are as nearly correct as possible in round numbers, the reader may also form some conclusion as to the comparatively small proportion of

genuine sealskins there can be amongst the enormous mass of jackets and pelisses that under that denomination fill the streets of Europe and America in winter time. The number of sealskins procured annually does not exceed one hundred and sixty thousand. Allowing as a very moderate computation five skins to make a jacket, this only gives thirty-two thousand jackets a year, without making any deduction for the host of minor articles that are made of sealskin. Again, five skins simply salted at, say, fifteen dollars apiece, will cost seventy-five dollars, or £15. They have then to be shaved, dressed, dyed, and made up, for which we may add at least another £7 10s. It will thus be seen that a small sealskin jacket must at the lowest possible price cost £22 10s. Yet we see philanthropic shopkeepers selling them at £10 and £15. There must be a great mortality amongst cats somewhere or other.

The seal killing over, we lunched at the Alaska Company's mess, and in the course of the meal partook for the first time of the

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1. The first step in the process is to identify the problem or issue that needs to be addressed. This involves gathering information and understanding the context of the problem.

2. Once the problem is identified, the next step is to define the objectives and goals of the project. This helps to clarify what needs to be achieved and provides a clear direction for the team.

3. The third step is to develop a plan or strategy to address the problem. This involves breaking down the problem into smaller, manageable tasks and determining the resources needed to complete each task.

4. The fourth step is to implement the plan. This involves putting the strategy into action and monitoring progress to ensure that the project is on track.

5. The final step is to evaluate the results of the project. This involves assessing the outcomes against the objectives and goals and identifying any areas for improvement.

[illegible]

disputants becoming very screwed on the sacramental port wine. Holy Russia's disciple did penance for a week afterwards ; but his antagonist, having recovered from his "head" next morning, was anxious to know when the priest would be ready to "go ahead" again and give him some more instruction. He said he was prepared to be converted "a lot ;" in fact, he "thirsted after righteousness," and approved highly of what he called "that suction dogma" of the Greek Church. As to being converted, well, he guessed he had some scruples that would last as long as the port wine ; but he would give the priest a fair show any way, and engage to see him to bed after each meeting.

We parted with Wasili at Ounalaska, and also with the "Boss," a pup of "Lady's," the spaniel I had bought at Nonaimo. Wasili had become quite one of the ship's company. To the men he was a sort of parrot, and they taught him to talk. Sailors' parrots are not as a rule courteous, holy, or decorously chaste in their conversa-

Wassili looked very like "Rags." The yacht was unmoored, she was moving off—

“Wasili! no good, eh? No good!”

He jumped up and looked round, waved his cap with the broadest of smiles. “No gōōt, God d——n—you comin’ back, pleenty midvit (bears) find. No gōōt, God d——n—blast,” etc.

Since I have returned to England, I have received a letter from Stauf, of which the following is an extract:—

“Wasili is always talking about you and your friends on board the *Lancashire Witch*. He is very grateful to you all; he thinks you were so good to him, and he is very proud of the presents he received. He says he always heard from Russians that Americans were bad, but that Englishmen were *far worse* (with great emphasis on the last two words). However, he no longer believes that. He calls himself a gentleman, and carries his head very high; he will hardly look at his fellow-villagers, and if you ask him what countryman he is, he answers immediately, ‘I Englishman.’ It is very amusing to hear him tell how he was treated on board the yacht; how, before

every meal, a servant gave him his whiskey; how he slept upon velvet, and had a servant to make his bed for him," etc. (Wasili, as there were no vacant cabins or berths, used to sleep on the velvet-covered seats in the after saloon, which explains his "sleeping on velvet.")

In his brothers' village, the secluded and pretty little hamlet of Ozinki, Wasili for ever hence will be the oracle. He is a great traveller, and if he choose to assert that he has journeyed "beyond the Kaf and into the land of the Afritts," who shall gainsay him? In the long winter evenings, when the villagers pucker round the stove, and Wasili, with sententious pauses and superior wisdom, tells of the velvet beds, the whiskey, the piano, the rifles, the rods, the "samovar" boat, the hippopotamus skulls, the monkey, the swinging tables, and the comfortable interior of the ship that belonged to the great English "barin" with whom he travelled, he will be revered as Mahomet after his visit to heaven.

Well, well, good bye, old fellow; we have had many a pleasant tramp together.

And now we head fairly southward to San Francisco.

“Hurrah! hurrah! the wind is up, it bloweth fresh and free,
And every cord, instinct with life, pipes loud its fearless glee;
Big swell the bosomed sails with joy, and they madly kiss the spray
As proudly through the foaming surge the Sea King bears away.”

Not a sea king, perhaps, but a veritable sea queen, and one that in eighteen months of cruising, taking rough and smooth as it came, without fear or favour, has never shown a weak point from truck to keel.

The Golden Gates are in view again, San Francisco is at hand; and here, gentle reader, our companionship comes to a close. Gentle you must be if you have gently followed me thus far without—without indulging in expletives. However, your long-suffering is at an end. May we meet again, but if we do, may our positions be reversed, so that you wield the pen and I the knife. If I have wearied you I am sorry, and most heartily do I forgive you, although De Rochefoucauld

SURE THAT THE ONE THING WE CAN never regret is being bored by us. The next thing to say now is, I believe, that if in the perusal of the interesting pages the reader has found the slightest amusement or pleasure on his side and will have been fully accomplished and my trouble amply repaid. I will not say you so poor a compliment. That sort of thing is exceedingly pretty and polite, but as they say in California it is "a little too thin" for these times.

CAN I go without a word for "Tip," whose quarry has lost so many hours wings? Impossible. My dear Tip, in memory of that night spent at Chignik Bay, when you cling on to the tent-pole and solemnly cursed the tent-pegs, the wind, and the whole of the northern hemisphere, "here's a double health to thee."

The same to H——, who, whenever there was a good beat to be hunted over, or a chance of unusual amusement of any kind which admitted of only one or two enjoying

it, invariably insisted, "One of you fellows go; I'll go another way, or try something else." Without such exercise of good nature a yachting cruise would be unbearable; it is the little leaven which leaveneth the whole, and with it H—— was always ready.

One thing more and I have done. In glancing over these pages, I note a far too frequent application of that insidious little pronoun, "I." "I" really should not assume so prominent a position. The fact is, though, reader, that without more experience than "I" possesses, it is rather difficult, in a chronicle of this kind, to avoid adopting this style of relation. Please accept, therefore, "I's" apologies for so much self-assertion.

And so farewell, reader and owner, messmate and crew.

"Heave the type, printer."

"And a quarter seven."

"Right for'ard there?"

"Aye, aye."



- Hier steht es auf der Schwelle
Hier steht es in der Lücke
Vier stehen wir uns Brüder
Auf einem Schiffe wieder " " "

THE END.

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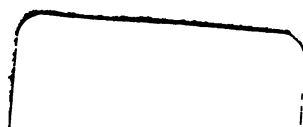
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